


milestone





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MILESTONE

Creative Expressions of Western North Carolina Artists & Writers

Southwestern
Community College
Art & Literature Review

2002

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Mission Statement

Milestone is the annual art and literature review published by Southwestern Community College. The purpose of this magazine is to showcase the creative expressions of Western North Carolina artists and writers.

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This issue of *Milestone* is dedicated to the memory of Barbara Frogge, whose everlasting spirit of teaching excellence will be remembered by all the many lives she touched.

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Austen Mikulka
First Place - Art

First Place - Poetry

A Great Black Dog

George Frizzell

A great black dog
 stalks me
 at night
several times
 I have seen him
eyes so dark
 so deep—
 emptiness
 and void
late
 late at night
 wrestle at times
strong, and
 near me
 a fierce face
muscles
 wrapped in fur so soft
 so easy to hold
fangs so close
 eyes...so dark
 fur...so soft
a great black dog
 vicious—
 wrapped in cool fur
 and subtle dreams
 ...false promises
one day
 if I am gone
 look for the tracks
 of a great black dog

First Place - Short Story

Sight

Linda Young

*Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird;-
Beauty through my senses stole;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.*
Ralph Waldo Emerson

I am a blind woman. I see out into the world, know the heads that shake with pity. As I approach, the bodies that are shadows move always to my right so that I may pass, a person taking up more space than I need and none of theirs. My eyes are covered with a silver sheen that, when the sun washes over my face with the slow brilliance of dusky remembrance, makes them luminous. So, I cannot understand why the world will not look me straight in the face. I think I am beautiful, or it is an image that I have chosen to live with. I know that my eyeballs move rapidly, back and forth, especially when I am thinking or listening to a new tape. I love Dickens, anything by Dickens. My gaze, such as it is, is not hollow. I know what I see. My hair is black and long, cascading to my waist. I feel the shine; my fingers tell me that it is not matted down like the mane of an old horse. I smell like Ivory soap and baked bread and am considered to be one of the finest cooks in Saint Martin's Parish. My friend gave me a green dress several years ago, and that is what I wear to sit on the porch and listen to the sacred world around me. She told me that the embroidered flowers that I feel when I pass my hand over my body are pink, but I know that they are really a soft creamy white, like the magnolia. I am tall, for when I go into the house, I raise my arms and I touch the arch that leads me into the living room. The room is always cool in summer, frigid in the winter, ice encrusted over the cranberry glasses that once held strong lemonade; a wedge of the bright lemon clinging to the side of the glass; the green grass waving in the fields, the wild, red roses tapping on the gray wood of the porch. I hear these things, always. Brown chairs and a huge sofa crowd the room so that I must lean over and feel my way from one doorway to the other. I have often thought of selling this furniture, let the echoes of an empty room sound throughout the house, but it is what Mama has left me. Perhaps one day I shall have the courage to lie down on that sofa and think about the possibilities.

I move through this space of cold time and yesterdays and push open the white swinging door to the comfort of my kitchen. I am not fat. I am not skinny. I am a large-boned blind woman. I eat what I cook, tasting as I make my way around this kitchen, from stove to icebox, without tribulation, for this is my natural territory. My only fear is fire. If it were not for the fire, I would call this kitchen holy ground: white and clean, Formica mint green table, plastic chairs to match, faded blue curtains pushed inward by the breeze. To my left, as I stand at the stove, stirring a chicken stew, feeling the dumplings bump my spoon then the sides of the pot, is a large window. It looks out at the wooden fence, barbed, that Papa built to keep the sheep from straying; beyond are the woods, deep and darkly green. The sounds of the country nights come to me from the woods: wild hogs grunting, nutria screaming, owls complaining, nighthawks screeching with fresh catches, perhaps a baby coon. And the smell is death, death out of the thorny world. But I am not disturbed by what I see.

How I came to be a blind woman is a very sad story. Tragic to some. I have been told, even when I do not want to know, that people have literally sobbed when they hear the tale of this poor woman, only thirty-eight, doomed to a sightless existence. But they are wrong, though their sympathy is well-meaning. This is my story, beginning with the important place in the true history of Inez Marie Bateaux, nee Biguenet.

Mama was a short, dark little woman, with a quick step and a commanding voice that calmed the chickens at dusk and the horses at mating season. She gave birth to five children, with less

than two years between each, without the assistance of a doctor. She taught us all to take care of ourselves, how to cook and sew and run a farm, in case she was not around for all of us to grow up. Mama did not have a good life when it came to love, to Papa, nor did we children. I don't think a harder man walked this earth. Papa was as tall as she was short, as blond as she was dark, and as mean as she was kind. Papa liked to beat us. He had big, brown hands, like the leather they use for horse saddles. When Mama died, probably from just being tired of it all, not one sprig of her black hair had turned white. She was only forty-three. I can't stomach anymore seeing Papa in my mind, except to remember brother Douglas the night he packed his clothes in a gunny sack, kernels of corn still rattling at the bottom, and kissed me goodbye.

The years went by like a wayward spiral. When I think back, it seems like morning and night were no different. The cool wet dew that cleanses your bare feet, dandelions between your toes, and the warmth of the breeze off the canal; or the bragging chirps of the grasshoppers in the trees, the earthy smell of the dancing moss against your face. How I missed those things. I know it was the cooking that saved me then. I fried chickens and ducks and turkeys whole, in the big black pot under the pecan tree. And the children helped me. All little blond heads bobbing and running, bringing more pieces of wood to get the fire hot enough to keep the grease boiling. The skin had to be golden brown like the evening sun on the bayou, crinkled and crisp like the dried bark of a persimmon tree; then meat falls off the bone, salty and clean and melting in your mouth. I ended up in some cookbook about Cajun cuisine, my picture and all. To cook is to rest, to see the world from another angle.

I know the light that falls in silver gestures through the cold glass of windows. Our farm surrounded my world for sixteen years, bounded on each side by crops that would be sold, mostly for drink for Papa, sometimes for shoes and tattered clothes no better than the dark people that live up the road at Benoit Marsh. But, we accept the world for what we can get out of it, or not. I could kill a chicken with a flick of my wrist, down a hog with two fells, cut cane faster than most men Papa hired for twenty cents an hour. My arms are strong now because of this, my constitution enduring.

I loved my brothers soundly and without compromise. After Douglas, three little ones left, with white inner bodies and brown arms and legs from running in the sun. Despite hunger and red strokes that covered their backs, their laughter penetrated the hot air of summer, their giggles the cold atmosphere of winter. Soap was my gift to them, when I bathed them in the yard before going to supper, when their hair was full of black mud and cow manure. They were my inspiration for recipes that brought people from miles around, the workmen begging at the door, their wives soliciting hints to satisfy their husbands. I am still famous for my blackberry pie; plump purple berries culled from brambles fresh with baby snakes. And there I would reach my hand, oblivious, yet praying and never once was struck with the fang of death. I did not see what I did not see then.

But now the subject of false love, hard love, voices in the night. He came in winter. 1935. The cane fields had been turned and Papa was ready to start them on fire. His name was March, and Papa had hired him to take care of the firing and tilling. I watched him coming up the graveled road, perched on an old black mule, bare back, his long legs draped from left to right, his toes dragging on the ground. He looked like a fool coming into an old town for a circus. I watched him from the kitchen window. The first night he held a torch in his hand, those legs again, splayed open, and between them I watched the dancing flames. Later, he came to the kitchen door for the promised meals. As I opened the screened door, the creaking warning me, I looked into his face. How could I have loved him so soon? I remember his words, his smell, and soon I was to know the taste and touch of him.

"Your daddy says you gonna gimme some supper when I'm through," he said. He was leaning against the doorway, his shirt open, smoke and dirt covering his wet face, black greasy hair falling to his eyes. Black eyes, looking not at me, but into my kitchen.

"You come back when the fire dies down. I can get you a plate out under the big pecan tree."

"I want sometin' to drink, too. Can I have it now? I'm parched."

I laughed at that word, at the thought of it, dry and thirsty like me.

He waited for me, sitting with his back against the tree trunk, his arms crossed over his chest, and smiling. I sat next to him, gave him the plate, and watched him eat, scraping the plate with the spoon, cleaning it with the soft, white bread I had made that morning.

And so I married him. Three months later, two weeks after he had asked me to marry him, as we sat on the top steps of this porch, the sun beating down on our heads, gnats attacking our sweaty faces. I kept swatting them away, trying to make sure my hair stayed tightly in the bun. The dazzling light fell in craggy streaks from between the moss of the old oak tree and onto the slats of the porch. That silver light again.

"Inez, I come here to do a job. But, galddamned if I ain't fall in love wid ya. We can have a good life here. Don't want ta take ya wandering, not a girl like ya. Ain't nowhere to go anyways, not wid the 'pression on. It's bad out there, real bad."

"Yes." That's all I said, yes and yes when I should have said, yes, but take me wandering.

But I was already a mother of sorts, to three children, with years to go before they would leave, maybe to follow Douglas into the mist of life. Robin was only six, Charles, twelve, and Henrie, fifteen. I was eighteen. How many men was I supposed to love, and how?

"You don't pay me mind, only those rattling, noisy brothers of yours," he would tell me as we lay in bed at night, my heart pounding, waiting for the touch I had heard about, for love. It came only after the complaining was done, after all energy had gone out of me and I had nothing left but thoughts of the coming day and endless chores.

"Why can't you help with the boys? Papa only swats at them, and you, you treat them like they were nothing but farm animals." I would say this, and I had to look west toward the rice fields, green and brown, ready for thrashing. I thought that I could live no longer in this world. I hated the way he looked at me.

It was on an afternoon such as this, cloudy and threatening, that I had finished making pots and pots of hot boudin, had stuffed the guts of pigs with ground meat and onions and rice and pepper and garlic; my stomach turned with the thought of all that food and what had gone into making it. I knew I was with child, and it was the first time in all the years, even when Mama died, that I lay my head on my arms, on this Formica table, and cried. I knew the meaning of despair.

A boy. I think he stripped my life away for a time. For six months, I walked as though in the fog of early morning on the bayou. March began the drinking, like Papa. When I at last walked out of the clouds, Henrie had become a young man and carried his young nephew on a back sling he had concocted; it was brown and had two straps that attached to his shoulders. I would watch Henrie stomping up the road like a proud soldier, the little blond head of my baby bobbing in the wind, a song of blackbirds and laughter dancing toward me through this open window. Finally, I named my baby Jake.

How would I describe the next two years but a time of happiness? Papa died and March decided to disappear from my bed on a spring morning. And now all I see of him is a form of a man in an empty white light, a pillow grown brown from his head. I washed the sheets in pine soap,

so there is no smell to remember him by. Jake grew, fat and blond and happy. On a ripe morning in spring, I smelled the blooming wisteria, and then Charles was taken by the Catholic Church. I watched him leave in Father Minnette's blue Ford, the priest with his arm around my brother's shoulder. The last words I heard were "...and you shall save souls. I will show you what is done to save souls and satisfy the church." Then the tussled blond head turned swiftly toward me, without a smile, and then he was gone into the bosom of a church I have not set foot in for years and years now. Henrie, on his eighteenth birthday, enlisted in the army, and I feared for him because there was talk of a war far away.

"Sis, you know I listen every night to Mr. Roosevelt. My country needs me. Things are good here now. I can do more in other places than here. Faraway places full of different people."

"Oh, Henrie! Yes, yes. Go. You must see the world. You must. But promise me you will write me often, tell me about it all, Henrie. Tell us all. Your letters will be such wonderful stories for the boys." So I kissed him goodbye and held him in my arms. Dear, dear Henrie, swaggering away with a bare back into the cool mist of morning.

Robin was a child of the water with many friends among the shrimp boaters, and so he roamed and sailed, and I saw him very little. I had Jake and my cooking. I sold off much of Papa's land to an oil company and used the proceeds to start a cooking business. Every day I would awake at four in the morning and cook for the work crews that had come to drill the oil, now for the war effort. I was paid well, wrote a cookbook, which the manager of the work crew had sent to a friend in New Orleans. It was published with the title *French Country Cooking*. My life had become mine and it was full and pleasing.

In this country, there is an old wives' tale about fire and the old people. No matter how age blinds you, cataracts blunt the world, you will always see the fires of hell coming at you. *Feu et les Vieux. Dust to dust, ashes to ashes. A thing that happens in the soft shadows of dawn.*

A chocolate cake, cornbread, chicken gumbo simmering on the stove. A mother out in the early morning picking tomatoes. A baby sleeping in a little soft bed, blue sheets, and a yellow pillowcase with embroidered fireflies. A towel thrown haphazardly on the kitchen counter. Red and orange rainbows spread across the horizon where the brother Robin stands on the bow of a shrimp boat. Smoke from the new oil refinery blotting out the smell of a fiery house. Chirps of birds, scream of a child calling *Mama*. Hands pulling away, *you ain't go in there, you ain't go in there*. She turns towards the light that is no more and knows that on this final morning, there is nothing left but cool, gray shadows and memory.

I am a blind woman who sees clearly the pain scurrying around in the piles of ashes that were the people in my life. I still cook, and am more famous than before. My recipe for dirty rice is used in all of the best restaurants...chicken liver, beef shank, onions, celery, garlic, red and black pepper, chopped collards. My name is on the menus, I have insisted on that: *From Inez Bequenet's Cajun Country Recipes*. I live alone. And when I am asked about how I feel about my loss, then my success, I reply with Bunderby's words from *Hard Times*: "Every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was a bargain across the counter."

But I still see the rain that can douse fire but did not come for me, how it is here in Louisiana when the sun sends a gold ribbon over a cloud and the beam falls down, softly, on the shaking waters of the bayou. No one needs to describe these things to me. I know that nothing has really changed. It is autumn and the leaves are gone from the pear tree, the persimmons have fallen and rotting on the ground, covered with greedy wasps. The blind woman sees things with icy clarity.



Troy Brolin
Second Place - Art

Second Place - Poetry

Wintering

Gene Lominac

Snow-gauzed
shadows of themselves in half-light
before night ends, before morning begins
white-roofed old barns

slope-shouldered like tired old men
winter-wrapped in weathered wood
wait out winter in cold air
drafting through remembered warmth

stirring wisps of forgotten hay
over stalls where cows were
where cats patrolled the ordinary for surprises.
In waking kitchens

warming to housecoat endurance of wives
arthritic in on-going
white haired old men
slope-shouldered over hot coffee and biscuits

winter-wrapped in plaid flannel
wait for sunrise to visit barns—
outlasting needs and dreams—
cats curled up

in corners of belonging
unconcerned for season's insistence
certain
spring will be right on time.

A Day at the Races

David Lewis

Jean and I had been married three weeks when I discovered she had never been to a horse race. "Do you mean to tell me," I asked, amazed at what I had just heard, "that you have never been to a horse track and bet a couple bucks on the ponies?"

"Never," she replied. "Gambling is for losers, and I've worked too hard for my money to throw it away on a bunch of horses."

"You don't go to horse tracks, do you?"

Here I'm wondering if my family, especially Mother, would accept someone who dies *not* gamble, and she's asking me a question that would have them rolling on the floor with laughter.

"Well, a couple of times," I lied. "Not for the gambling, of course, but for the sport itself—the color, the fashion parade of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen as they study the magnificent thoroughbred horses." Actually, I described to her that wonderful racing scene from the film *My Fair Lady*. And she bought it. So the following Saturday afternoon, we set out for Hialeah Park.

"Where are you going?" Jean asked, as we drove past lanes of parked cars and into the valet parking area.

"Here," I replied, as attendants opened our car doors.

"I think valet parking is a terrible waste of \$5," I was told as I stepped up to the Clubhouse entrance and paid \$20 more for the reserved seats and then \$4 for two programs.

"You won't have any money left to bet," my calculating partner told me as we walked into the paddock area where the horses were being saddled for the first race.

"Not to worry," I told her and suggested we stroll around and check out the horses. I have a couple of betting theories, and the one I planned on using that day was the "best-dressed trainer system." This system was based on the idea that if a trainer is well dressed, it indicates he feels he has a winner and wants to look good in the photos taken after the race.

I made my pick—a slim dark-haired trainer, white dress shirt, dark blue tie, tweed jacket, dark blue pants, and black loafers. Jean and I made our way to the Clubhouse and found our seats in time to watch the traditional Parade of Flamingos prance around the track. It really was a beautiful sight.

Jean thanked me for bringing her and then said, "I thought you were feeding me a line about horseracing being beautiful and all, but I was wrong. I'm having a great time."

"Honey," I said, as I took her hand, "I would never lie to you."

The trumpet blared, announcing the horses entering the track for the first race. I excused myself with, "I'll be right back, darling. Would you like a drink?" She shook her head "no" while giving all her attention to the parade of horses.

"Number 8—\$10 across the board," I told the man behind the window. He broke the first of the hundred dollar bills I always hide in my clothes when gambling.

I lost the first race to a trainer in white shoes, gray pants, a light blue button-down shirt, and a double-breasted blue jacket with gold buttons. I never noticed him. The son-of-a-gun must have changed after I left the paddock.

"But," I told myself, "that's the horses for you."

The same scenario took place for the next couple of races. The second race went to a guy in boots, jeans, and a cowboy shirt. The third race was captured by a girl wearing overalls, for crying out loud. Obviously, the best-dressed trainer theory was not working. So I bought a couple of Bloody Marys and sat down next to my wife, who was reading the racing form.

"Where did you get that?" I asked.

"Oh," she replied airily, "a nice gentleman gave it to me. He was leaving."

I thought to myself that he must have bet on the tweed jacket, then asked, "Do you know how to read that thing?"

"I'm figuring it out," came the reply. "Here's \$2. Bet it on number four to show."

"That horse is a prohibitive favorite," I told her. "You won't get back twenty cents on the dollar."

"I'm not betting to lose. Do what I tell you."

So I bet her lousy two dollars on the number four to show. Then I remembered an old gamblers' adage. First-time betters are lucky. So I broke another hundred dollar bill and bet \$50 to win and \$50 to place on Jean's number four.

Number four finished third. Jean smiled as I handed her the \$2.80 she had won with her show bet. She was happy with her eighty-cent profit, and I was down four hundred bucks. So I decided to go to my back-up theory—the Gray Horse Strategy.

My grandpa once told me gray horses have real good bloodlines. So for the next few races, I invested in gray horses, to little avail. Jean, on the other hand, had won two more show bets and was up over \$4. I was down over \$500. I was trying to remember where I had hidden the last hundred dollar bill when Jean handed me \$4. "Put it all on number ten to win."

"To win?" I asked. Her horse, a cute little brown filly, was nine to one. "Are you sure you don't want a show bet?"

"No," came the confident reply. "This horse will win, and I got it from this." She pointed to her racing form.

"Well, Miss Confidence," I asked, "what do you think of the twelve horse?" A big handsome gray.

"Oh, he's a good horse, but the filly will win this race."

I found my last hundred in my left sock and invested heavily on numbers ten and twelve—\$10,

perfectas and quinellas, and everything else I had on number ten to win. When I left the window, I was broke.

Well, it was a great race. Jean's cute brown filly led my big gray the entire race. The rest of the field was never in contention. While Jean was hugging me, happy to have won \$36, I was staring at the toteboard. Damn, I had made a bit hit! I showed Jean where to collect her ticket, and I wandered over to the cashier for the *big* people. My payoff was \$4,750. As I turned away from the window, stuffing bundles of hundreds into my pockets, there was Jean. Her eyes, normally narrow slits of suspicion, were wide open.

"Why did they give you so much?" and then before I could hush her, "Did you win that money on my horse?"

"Easy, Honey," I whispered. "We don't want to attract attention," I told her while smiling at a Daymon Runyon-like character who was listening to our little exchange. This guy, about fifty-five or so—yellow pants, black and red-checkered jacket, white loafers, yellow shirt, and solid green tie—was watching us over the pages of his racing form.

Jean shook off my arm and said in a tight whisper, "I won't be hushed! You answer me. Did you win all that money on my horse?"

"Well, of course, I did. You handicapped that race perfectly. I love you." I tried to give her a hug.

She pushed me away and announced, "I want half! I studied and I gave you the winner."

"Honey," I pleaded, "you bet and won."

"Sure," she interrupted, "but I only got this." She held up the \$36 clenched tightly in her fist.

"But," I protested, "you did a great job of handicapping. I can't wait to tell Mother."

"You won so much more," she complained. Mr. Yellow-pants was smiling.

"Jean," I asked, "have you ever seen my family's crest? The Lewis Coat of Arms?"

"You never told me anything about a Coat of Arms," she replied as her eyes narrowed with their usual suspicion.

"Well," I explained, "the Crest has a deck of cards in the upper left-hand corner, and in a circle around its shield are emblazoned the words, 'Shekels must go in the window before shekels come out of the window.'"

While Jean mulled this over, I asked Yellow-pants, "What do touts get nowadays?" He quickly folded his paper and walked off with a good story to tell his pals.

I looked at Jean. She was busy tearing the subscription blank from the racing form. She looked up and asked, "What's a tout?"

Ah, I thought, Mom's going to be so pleased.



Jessica Edwards



Chris Kellam



John Ballentine



Joshua Faust

A Memoir of Dori

Timea Porteleki

Monday, September 20, 1987. What an unusually warm and sunny day with a clear blue sky. I am about to go to school when my mum warns me: "Timi, take your umbrella because it may rain this afternoon."

"Well, I don't think so, and actually, I don't have more room in my bag."

On my way to school, I meet Dori, my best friend for six years. She is also fifteen and lives in our neighborhood. Today she is wearing blue jeans with the pink pullover, her favorite top.

When I get closer to her, I can see her short, brown, curly hair is still wet from the shower she took this morning. She always waits for me here at this same place, our secret meeting point, holding her school bag in her hands and saying hello with a big smile in her deep blue eyes.

"Hi, Dori, how are you doing today?"

"Fine, and hoping we won't have any rain today because I didn't want to carry my umbrella. I don't like it."

We are on our way to our new high school, which we started only two weeks ago. With a lot of excitement in our voices, we talk over and over everything that had happened to us since we said goodbye to each other last night. By the time we reach our school, we have about ten more minutes before we start our first lesson.

We enter the classroom and go to our places to sit down and get ready for our geography lesson. Of course, we sit next to each other in the fourth row of desks, right in the middle of the classroom. The pale yellow walls are full of colorful pictures and maps from different parts of the world we have never been to. We always planned and imagined going to these places one day and exploring them. We both loved geography in primary school and are still very excited about going to unusual places of the world; we love traveling back into time with our great geography teacher and our imagination.

As always, Mr. Kubik—our young, energetic, just graduated, and handsome teacher—opens the door and enters the classroom sharply at 8 a.m. to start his next journey with all of us in the mysterious field of geography. Everyone in the class is silently listening to every word he is saying when suddenly Dori whispers something into my ear.

I am not sure what she wanted to tell me. I am confused. I see myself sitting next to my best friend from outside of the classroom. I can also see my classmates around, listening to Mr. Kubik with total amazement. I clearly see Dori sitting next to me in her favorite pink pullover. She is leaning closer and closer towards me and murmuring something. I cannot hear. My eyes are fixed upon Mr. Kubik, but I cannot see him. I am completely lost somewhere in this world when I hear someone very close asking a question. Since I am not answering, Mr. Kubik steps closer to me, calls my name, and asks his question again.

"Timi, what's the capital of the Republic of South Africa?"

By the time he gets next to me, I realize that I am back in my geography classroom, and Mr. Kubik is waiting for my answer.

I am looking for the desired place in my head. I am still lost with some names coming to my mind: Vienna, Nyiregyhaza, Australia, Melbourne, Hungary, Austria, Nyiregyhaza, and Melbourne. I cannot find the right answer. I panic.

"I don't know, sir."

Mr. Kubik surprisingly looks at me then addresses the same question to someone else in the class.

I am confused. I do not understand what is happening to me and why. I am flushed; my heart is beating faster than it should be. I feel like I have hundreds of butterflies in my stomach and feel some tears dropping on a small, torn piece of paper making a mess on the freshly written blue lines: "Timi, we're going to Australia, my parents decided."

Oh no, that is the something I could not understand when she whispered. That is the sentence we have both been afraid of since we were thirteen. That is the sentence we always knew would come true one day. And that is the sentence we could not or did not want to believe in. No one or nothing else could have separated us from each other but this one sentence. I am out of the classroom again with the drumming sound of the unknown Australia in my ears; I am desperately searching for all the past memories from our friendship that might save our future.

Our only and last hope is our belief in our very strong and special relationship. We hope that our bond would be stronger than her parents' decision. She also stares at the piece of paper in front of us. We both feel the same. Confused. Puzzled. What are we going to do now? How can we live on so far from each other? I can see her wet eyes saying that she tried everything she could last night in order to change her parents' will and convince them to stay at home, in Nyiregyhaza. I start to think about this place, the place where we grew up and went through so many things together.

All of our memories come alive as different scenes of the same film. I remember how we built our secret shelter in the bushes of the playground to cook our lunches and dinners, and also to hide away from those annoying boys who chased us. Or the burial of that tiny, innocent mouse we found dead on our way home from school. We threw away our schoolbags and started to dig a small hole to place our newly found and lost friend in the sand under the shade and protection of a willow. We prayed and we cried for him together. Or the big matches we played on the nearby tennis court with some boys last summer. And all the afternoons we spent together after school. The first dates we went on together and the first experiences of becoming grown-ups. Rock and roll, movies, parties, disappointments, loves, friends, endless hours we spent together, and all the white lies to our or each other's parents just to spend more time together.

Dori was always braver, a bit taller, more adventurous, and more optimistic than I was. I was always shier, more cautious, and more emotional. We have always been a good "pair," controlling, teaching, and forming each other unconsciously. We became the best friends ever who could understand each other merely by looking at each other's eyes and saying no words at all.

At the end of that Monday, after saying our goodbyes, we both felt and knew that this was not a simple farewell. It was meant for a longer time, or maybe forever? Neither of us knew if we could meet at least one more time in our lives, but we both felt that it was the end of our real childhood and the beginning of some mysterious, unknown adventure. Some harsh sound disturbed our total silence. It was an airplane crossing the sky.

The last sentences I could hear from Dori were sadly optimistic: "Don't worry, Timi, I'll never forget you and our friendship. We'll always be each other's very best friends and can meet anytime if we want, either in Melbourne or in Nyíregyháza. I'll miss you."

I saw her short, brown, curly hair, still wet, and her pink waving figure vanishing behind the willows.

That was the last time we met at our secret place, and the first time I could not see her big smile in her deep blue eyes. She went away to start her new life somewhere she has never been to, with some new friends she has never ever met before. She started a mysterious journey by herself, leaving me, and all of our memories, behind.

I am still not sure that it was raining or we just cried on that Monday afternoon, but I know, I wished my umbrella had been there with me to hide myself under.

Timi

Doris

Jessica Winkler

How does it feel—
To see your life frittered
Away
Like sand
In the hand
Of a careless child?

To watch the hourglass
Dripping out and over
Away
Your lifeblood
The potency of youth
Leaving as you watch it go

With hands outstretched in desperation
With newly wrinkled hands outstretched—
Newly wrinkled?

They are *not* newly wrinkled—

They are roadmaps—showing the interstates and backroads—the high and low ways you have chosen

Or been forced upon because you missed your exit.

Hindsight is always 20-20, but foresight nearly never is and your hands are incontrovertible evidence.

You grow grimmer and grimmer as you realize the inevitability of being mortal,

And those you know and love whisper of the growing bitterness you keep tucked beneath your tongue.

You stride about, growing discontent in your one room castle, and your eyes seek out the fortress on the hill. Whenever you grow weary and fatigue tries to stop you in your tracks your eyes look up and spite sprouts anew.

"If only foresight had known—if only I could have seen it coming;

I must have blinked as we passed the sign and gone on, missing the turnoff to happiness for the straight narrow path to hell.

For surely the bloody trickle of sand I see before me, the signposts, the markers, surely these lead to hell."

You move by rote and measured pace

Your tongue only emerges to strike

And, yet,

"There must be something more"

You seek out hope the way a babe seeks out his mother's breast;

The way a child hunts down the jingling music that leads to the ice cream man;

The way a man seeks out a mate;

A woman, a lover;

A society, salvation;

Yet you feel bereft of all.

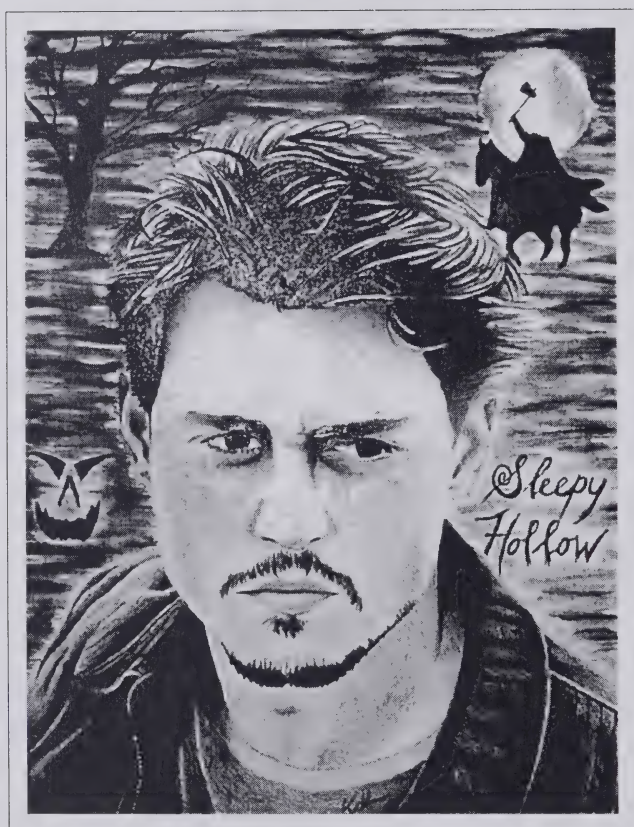
And hope

Springs

Eternal...



Austen Mikulka



Chris Kellam

A Father's Decision (How My Mother Came to America)

Eric Hendrix

Manuel paced the small kitchen. Passing the little gas stove and circling around, he walked on by the tiny white porcelain sink in the rented apartment and into the hallway that led to the living room of his cramped two-bedroom home.

"Home," he thought, "our home."

When Francisca died, he had found himself face to face with another dilemma, another tragedy—this one worse than the previous because this one left him with an even larger family to raise and provide for alone. When his first wife had died, Manuel did not believe it possible to love another. (Cliché, I know, but it's only a cliché because it is true.) Francisca had changed all of that with her willingness to accept his two small children, and together they had three more, bringing the full count in his family to five children plus two adults.

Twelve years of happiness had passed, and the two eldest had moved to the great country north of the poor island of Puerto Rico in search of their own lives, leaving Manuel with the three younger siblings: Hector, Sonia, and the "baby" of his family, precious Gladys.

After battling the tuberculosis for several years, Francisca finally succumbed to the dreaded "white plague" ravaging their tiny island, and Manuel felt the despair known only to widowers and widows. He missed her. Her death, three weeks old, was just as vivid as it was a distant memory he would never again taste in this reality. Surreal images of their life together surrounded him and comforted him with both loneliness and contradiction. How does the soul reconcile conflicting desire for healing, with release, for a lover at the expense of melancholy? Their home was filled with celebration, music, and dance...she was a joyful spirit in his life. She was yesterday, distant and blurred; yet she was every thought, emotion, and desire driving him as he paced their small apartment. Not a religious man, he nonetheless found himself offering up pleadings to "God," the Catholic God of his childhood, imploring Him for direction and wisdom.

"What should I do with my children? How can I care for them? Hector, Sonia y Gladys? They are so young. They need a mother. I have not the strength to do it alone. Show me, dear God, what to do; my heart is broken!"

Puerto Rico—"Rich Port" in English—was a "stepping-stone" for Europeans from Spain on their way over to the United States during the "Great Immigration" that took place around the turn of the century. Manuel was proud of his family heritage, which included his father, Justó, and his wife, Elvira; they emigrated to this small tropical paradise during the late 1880s just prior to his birth in 1896. They never made it to America; in their hearts, Spain remained their home.

Manuel's parents, however, had long since passed away, and he was truly alone with his three small children on this equatorial island, which for him was no "Rich Port." Manuel believed the solution somehow lay in moving his remaining family to America; but this was something he could never afford. Of course, he could've written his older children from his first marriage, Louis and Irma, soliciting help, but Irma had just gotten married, and Louis? Well, Louis was a young man, first time in the city. Manuel decided to write his mother's sister in New York City to seek her help and advice. She was much older but lived alone in an area of the city known

as the "Bronx." Its elaborate apartment houses and higher standard of living compared to his modest dwelling here on the island somehow allowed him to think hopefully. With that decided, he stopped pacing, sat, and composed a letter to his aunt in "America."

As he composed the letter, Manuel's thoughts drifted across his three remaining children, and he allowed himself the satisfaction of a father who adores his seed. Hector was the true middle child of the family and the eldest of Manuel's second family. At thirteen, he was a bright adolescent who spent nights alone in the dark tunnels and catacombs of El Mora Castle, which sat on the coast of Puerto Rico near San Juan, towering over the Atlantic Ocean. Yes, he was hearty. Sonia was next in line and, at eleven, was even brighter and sharper than her older brother, Hector. She worshipped him like only a younger sister can and yearned to go with him to spend the night in the catacombs; but Hector, ever the "macho" of the family, would not hear of it. "The castle at night is no place for a young girl!" he repeated each time he went. Occasionally Sonia followed him silently until he disappeared in the darkness down the long forbidding dark tunnels. He never knew.

Meanwhile, Gladys, the youngest of the Heredia brood, remained at home near her "daddy," attempting to console him in ways only small children understand: giggles, hugs, and cuddles saddled with moments of silent compassion.

"Manuel is blessed," he thought, "even in the midst of my sorrow and pain, there is love."

Gladys climbed onto his lap at this point, her rich brown eyes dancing with joy. He placed his pen on the table, slid back the chair, and sat, her head resting against his chest, and her little heart rhythm gently keeping time.

The next morning Manuel mailed the letter. Several months passed before he heard from "Ti-ti" (the Spanish equivalent of "Aunt" in English); finally the anticipated letter came. He read fervently, full of hope, desperately searching for something to inspire and provide him with answers and encouragement, something to grasp. The children played outside unaware as he pored over the response. Her solution was not what Manuel expected. Being a man, he thought like a man and anticipated a plan of action similar to his wishes...but that's not what he received. Ti-ti wanted to help. She empathized with him and was saddened to hear of his great misfortune, but her resources were limited.

Ti-ti was wealthy, yes, and she was a true "spinster," having never married and living strictly within the code of her Catholicism. Money, however, was tight. Times were scary. The stock market had just crashed, and many expected the world as they knew it to be coming to an end. In her beloved city of New York, businessmen were committing suicide left and right as fortunes were lost and made in the same breath. It was in the late fall of 1929. Knowing times were tough and not knowing how long they would last, Ti-ti determined that the best she could do was to invest of herself and her resources into one of Manuel's children until such a time would present itself that the rest of the family could afford to move to the mainland. Perhaps that would only be a few years, perhaps never...no one knew for sure. But that was the best offer she could muster. Her heart pained her as she thought of those three "pobrecitos!" (poor little ones), but having lived a long life in the hardened corners of the city, she realized it was better to help one than none and left the choice to Manuel.

"Send me your brightest child," she wrote. "Send me the one with the most potential, who you believe would learn the quickest, adapting to the city and this wonderful country. Send me the one you believe will take full advantage of all that is here. I will clothe him, provide for him, feed him, and see to his education. He will lack nothing. I will also see that he remains in contact with you and not lose track of his family and will raise him in the traditions of the Holy Church."

The letter dropped from Manuel's hands, and he plopped at the kitchen table as tears of gratitude and bewilderment cascaded violently down his cheeks and spilled on the paper, smearing the ink of Ti-ti's beautifully penned letter.

For several days, "Pah-py" (as his children referred to him) was silent, brooding, and uncommunicative. He didn't ignore them; he simply could not function with the clashing rage of emotions boiling and storming like waves through the depths of his soul: despair in one wave and riding the crest of another, hope as brilliant as the rich brown eyes of his little Gladys staring up at him from his lap. Always a forthright man, deliberate in his ways like the rest of his family, Manuel wrestled from sun up to sun down with his decision, weighing the choices and considering the facts, the personalities, and the temperaments of his three children.

"Yes, Hector is the oldest. He is the man. It's important for a man to enter life fully prepared. Look at all the opportunities! He should be the one. It's only natural!"

He looked at them and watched as they played and Hector ran off to the castle again—another night in the dungeons, no doubt. "What a loner he is," Manuel thought. "He has never gotten over the death of his mother, Francisca....God, why isn't she here with me right now? I wouldn't be struggling like this! She would know exactly what to do. She was just that way."

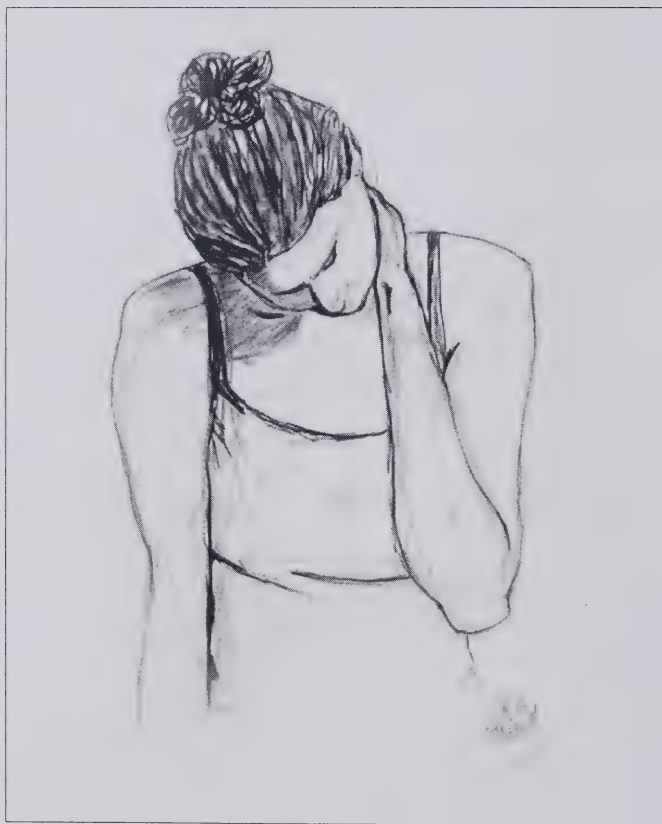
Just then Sonia interrupted his thoughts as she came bouncing back into the room running from her baby sister. "Those two..." Manuel reflected, "they are truly sisters. Sonia looks after her like a young mother. She...wait a minute! She is very bright, always looking after the others, making sure they have enough to eat and that dinner is prepared and always looking to help me. She never complains, yet I know she grieves silently in her heart for her mother. She is wise. A girl should not be raised alone by her father. How else can she learn the ways of a woman? She is entering her adolescence, and it is not long before she will encounter her womanhood. I know nothing about these issues; how can I truly help her?

"And Gladys? My little Gladys. Who would be left to sit in my lap and snuggle with me? I am selfish. I could never part with her eyes. No, it is not my Gladys."

The thoughts began to explode within Manuel's head, quickly revealing the true decision he knew must be made: "Sonia is the one." He allowed it to sink deeper within.

"Hector will be fine. He has his castle and his catacombs. He prefers solitude. He would be lost in the city. Besides, who knows what happens to a young boy who moves to the city? Like Louis, he might change. I do not want to burden my Ti-ti. Besides," reflected Manuel, "Sonia is obedient. She knows how to take care of herself and others. Sonia would be good for Ti-ti in her old age.

The girls ran off to their bedroom giggling and laughing with Gladys racing after Sonia, and in his heart, Manuel knew that he had made the right decision. "Sonia should go," and with that, he finalized his choice and began to make plans for her move to the mainland.



Erik McQueen



Rhiannon Lone Wolf

The Person Inside

Michelle Frizzell

For years I have heard and seen the reaction on society's faces when a larger person enters the room or perhaps walks by. I have watched the smirks on faces, and I've observed body language. I could just see in hidden script on foreheads: Why don't they use those elbows for pushing rather than bending?

Well, I can tell you from personal experience that I do not lack any elbow power. In fact my elbow is quite hard, callous, and double-jointed! I can assure you that my elbow gets a workout daily, and it is not by feeding my face. When I was eight years old, my mother started to monitor everything that was chewable and drinkable and that required the work of my esophagus. I was a large, big-boned eight-year-old. I was taller than most of my classmates, and my bone features were more present than theirs. I could sit with my legs crossed, and the plate of my kneecap was broad and rounded as a cat's saucer! I often felt like the character Grandma in the story of Little Red Riding Hood: "Why, Grandma, what big bones you have!" Except that I did not jump out and say, "The better to eat you with!"

I was built like my father, even down to the dental work! I often ask my mother why she wasn't a little choosier, why she didn't choose someone of "normal" size, and why she didn't consider the DNA makeup that I would inherit. My mother, a dainty woman in my opinion, was five feet, seven inches, and weighed 140 pounds. Keep in mind that this was after she'd given birth to four other children! She had a long torso, which is the only thing I can claim from her DNA, and she wore a size ten/twelve when she married my giant of a father. He was six feet, two inches, and weighed a whopping 248 pounds. When I came along, he was tipping the scales at 260 pounds, and his shoe size was 13EE.

My paternal relatives are large framed also. Notice I did not say the word FAT! No, in fact my aunts and uncles are not fat. Take my Uncle Homer, for example; he is retired from the Navy. His stature is six feet, three inches, he weighs 230 pounds, and his shoe size is 14DD. In the Navy, he was required to endure long physical workouts, such as timed tests for distance and while underwater. And you cannot be overweight when you are out to sea and the door opening into quarters is less than three feet wide. My aunt is five feet, eight inches, and weighs 180 pounds. She is the mother of five, and she is an LPN. I would definitely say that she gets a physical workout in a six hundred-hospital-bed facility.

By the time I was thirteen, my mother was more the inspector than the cook of the family. My plate was fixed first, and then my brothers and sisters would be free to fix their own. My sisters were always tall and lean. One sister at her heaviest weighed 155 pounds, and that was when she was pregnant with her firstborn! I often recall my oldest brother lecturing me on my weight. He, with his Marine knowledge and physique, had me convinced that I was the problem, not my metabolism or genetic makeup. I was just plain lazy and did not know how to push the food away.

When I entered my wonderful teenage years, I had very low self-esteem and would not do too much with the social circle. Yet my friends would often come over and eat my mother out of the house. You would have thought that with them being smaller than me, they would not have an appetite at all. My best friend in high school really amazed me with her food intake. While I had to monitor everything that came through my lips, she could have her cake and eat it too! She would have Dr. Pepper mixed with a pack of peanuts for breakfast and lunch! She always was able to consume the Big Roast Beef sandwich, large fries, and drink. Yet she only weighed 105 pounds, and that was soaking wet! My mother would often ask, "Karen, where is all this going to, your big toe?" I could not imagine eating the sweets and drinking the Dr. Peppers that Karen drank in one twenty-four-hour period.

Many diets I was on, and many times I failed. My caloric intake was often less than my siblings' intakes, and still I made no progress unless I fasted for a couple of days. Then, when I

did resume eating, I would often get very sick, and it would take days to get over it. I could never figure out why I could not lose any weight while growing up. My brother even suggested that my mom send me to a fat camp because I was so abnormal and different from the rest of the family!

The only time I felt normal in my family setting was when I was around my father and his side of the family—the big-boned side. When I sat down to watch TV, I could look at the next person; I did not look down like at my mother's house. The remarks and quirks on faces at my mother's often made me feel like I needed to be in the circus.

Society links being overweight with high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart problems. Like the recipe for chocolate milk, you cannot have one without the other. It doesn't seem to matter that many underweight individuals have high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart problems. I was checked regularly for high blood pressure and diabetes and never had any positive results. At times, I often wished that I would be positive for something! Even today my HDL is only 165, and my blood sugar is 177; I am told that this is good. Does that not prove that I'm not dressed for combat at Wendy's or that I don't use my brakes when it comes to Pepsi's? Hmmmm? I wonder how my oldest brother would react to this news—although his thin, fragile wife of fifteen years is now over the 170-pound mark, and he himself is carrying the spare tire around his waist, like that of his father!

Then there are those who can take in large amounts of fat and not gain any weight or show the aftereffects. For example, my sister consumes a large amount of fat in her diet. She is definitely the Dunkin' Donuts Queen. She knows how all the different kinds taste, and she consumes fast-food drive-through for lunch. Could it be that fat is not attracted to some individuals?

By the time I was in my sophomore year, I was still wearing the same size jeans as I did in the eighth grade, and only my breast size had increased. What a relief to be finally proportioning out! I played volleyball and attempted playing basketball, but I broke my collarbone and ended up being the girls' basketball team manager. This did not mean that I got to skip the workouts, though! Nevertheless, for some reason, my weight stuck to me like a magnet. I could not shake it, and it took a lot of energy not to gain even more.

Later on, as I got older and wiser, it dawned on me that I had spent most of my life trying to change my outward appearance and become someone that I could never be. Do not get me wrong. I do have bad habits that are not good for my health. But I was so hooked on trying to change my outside appearance that I never got time to know what I liked or disliked about me. I just knew I was different from the rest of my brothers and sisters. So you see, it's not that I lacked elbow power or didn't care about my looks because I had personal trainers at my side that did that for me, but they never looked at my genetic makeup or just at Michelle, the person inside. They only looked at me as compared to them, and I did not match them.

Each human being in the world is made up genetically different, and you cannot go back to the womb and redesign yourself. We humans are not recalled for parts because we lack them, nor does society put out a safety alert and recall as it does with an automobile. We can add to or take away from our parts, but we cannot go back and literally remove them and start over from the assembly line!

As I close, I am reading an article in *People* about Ann Wilson, of the famous rock group Heart, and her success with stomach stapling. I often have thought about this myself, but I look again and review what others have said about her weight problem and reexamine the ridicule she has endured from society. I only hope that Ann came to this decision on her own. Women are not and may never be content with this image—whether they are thin or "fluffy." Maybe Barbie was not the perfect toy for the female gender!

Horizontal and Holding (Lost Night Love Affair)

George Frizzell

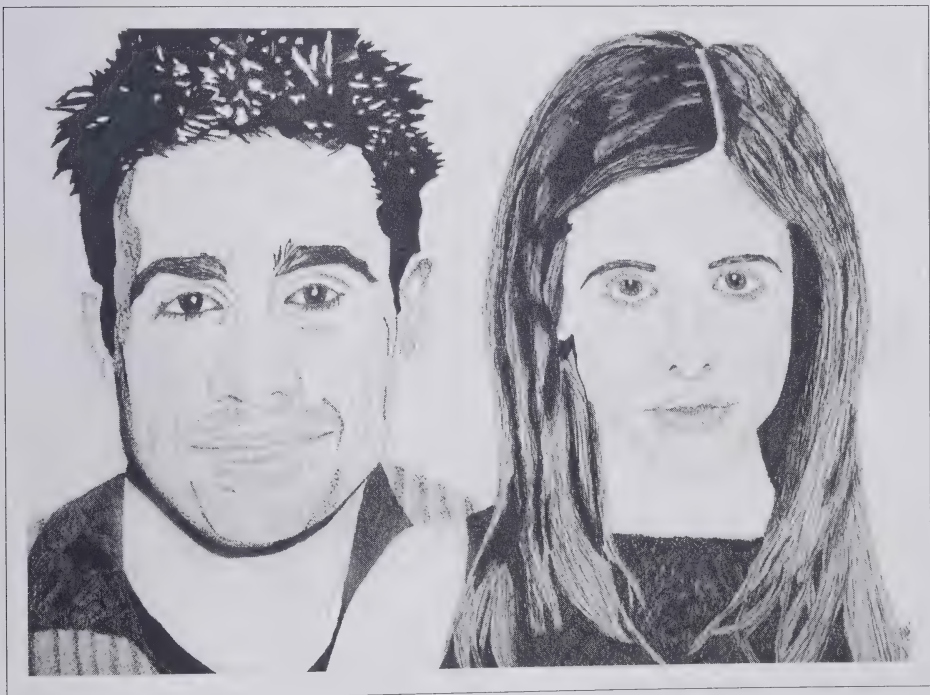
word charged breath,
and yes,

 I'm sorry
but I'm not apologizing;
amber coated hates,
a last scratching glance
and we are gone:

 in sleepy memories
 and boredom bred fantasies
 of stolen moments;

retreat—

 a sad command
that hearts follow blind;
we're over
not much left said;
we're horizontal and holding
a life in bed



Ashley Delashmit



Josh Sutton

The Year Halloween Was Silent

Marilyn Melissa Murphy

Old man Brown was humming joyfully to himself as he washed dozens of shining red apples. He smiled as he stared down at the water and observed the way it splashed over his wrinkled old hands and the bright red apple he held. It gave his hands and the apple a distorted look. He held it up to the sunlight that was falling through the window and gazed at it as if it were a treasure to be loved forever.

"Ya'll are going to make such wonderful treats for my little ghouls and goblins tonight," he chuckled tenderly to the apple. "They'll squeal with delight at the sight of you when I get finished with you."

He set the apples in a slightly mildewed wicker basket laying on the kitchen table. He stroked them affectionately and then walked over to a very old wood cook stove where he stirred a pot of caramel. Several years ago, his son Kyle had come down from New York to visit and took it upon himself to clean up the old man's house and give it the twenty-first century look.

"You've had this stuff for ages, Dad. You need to get rid of it and get new furniture," he had said.

Old man Brown had quietly sat back in his old rocking chair, calmly watching Kyle carry away all the ancient furniture; that is, until he tried to have the wood cook stove hauled out. Old man Brown refused to let Kyle throw away his old stove. Kyle had argued that it was a fire hazard.

"If you had a new stove, you wouldn't have to worry about chopping wood for that prehistoric piece of scrap metal, and I wouldn't have to worry about you catching the house on fire. You are an old man now, you know. You could have a stroke or a heart attack while you were trying to start a fire and drop a lighted stick."

The old man wouldn't budge on the matter. This was the stove that he had used to make the caramel for the candy apples that he gave to the little children who visited every year at Halloween. Even his late mother and her mother's mother had used this stove to make treats for the little ones on Halloween. It was a tradition to him. He would not break this tradition. Kyle had bickered about the stove the whole week, but when he had left, the stove was still there.

"Little peckerhead," he said now as he thought about Kyle. "He doesn't understand the value of carrying on a tradition. Our ancestors are probably twitching in their coffins. Oh well, no use in spoiling my Halloween cheer."

Removing the pot of caramel from the stove and setting in on the table, he went about preparing the apples for the little boys and girls that would be visiting his house tonight. As he worked, a smile extended across his face when he thought about how happy the kids were going to be when he gave them their very own candy apples.

He sat at the kitchen table for hours happily singing and dipping the apples in caramel and then coating them with crushed peanuts. He would then put the apples on long, brown, wooden trays to let them set. Every once in a while, he would glance at the TV as the newscaster warned parents of the possibility of Anthrax being put into the Halloween candy.

"Those darn Islamic groups. Why can't they just leave us alone? There's already enough crime in this country."

When he placed the last apple on a tray, he glanced out the window. "Oh my. It's going to be dark soon. I better carry these out to the porch before they start coming."

He picked up two of the trays and headed for the front door. He glanced at the shiny new wall clock mounted by the door. Old man Brown looked at it in disgust. It was a long square piece of glass with skyscrapers outlined with mirrors. It sure is ugly, he thought. It was almost six thirty.

Brown turned away from the clock with a "hmp." Walking out to the porch, he set the trays on a white table beside a brand new white rocking chair. He sat in the rocking chair and waited for the children to appear.

A chill breeze shook the walnut trees in the yard, causing a whirlwind of leaves to come floating to the ground. Brown watched a grey squirrel run through the sea of wilted and brittle leaves. It stopped once and looked up at the overcast sky and chattered and then ran off down the street. Brown watched it disappear behind a tall pine tree in the neighbor's yard. He turned his gaze back to his own yard and waited.

Another gust of wind wafted over Brown and ruffled his hair and his bushy eyebrows. The smell of the earth and the walnut trees blended to generate a perfume of naturalness. He breathed in deeply to inhale the sweetness of nature, and he waited.

He stared down the silent and deserted street. Dead leaves drifted across the sidewalks and into the road. Not a single car passed by, and not a single child walked in the streets. It was completely silent except for the rustling of the leaves.

Brown looked at his watch. Ten o'clock. He stood up, sad. "Well, I guess they're not coming," he said gloomily. As he picked up the trays of candy apples, tears filled his eyes and ran down his cheeks. He feebly walked back into the house with a dejected heart.

When he reached the kitchen, he set the trays on the table and looked somberly at them. "Damn those Islams," he cried with a tear-choked voice. "They've ruined Halloween."

He gaped at the apples for a few minutes and then said, "I might as well make applesauce and jam out of these apples. Maybe even an apple pie. There's no use in letting them go to waste. I've never been a wasteful man."

He picked up the trays and carried them to the sink and dumped them out so that he could wash the caramel and peanuts off. "I'll be here all night," he complained. "I should have coated some with walnuts so I could tell them apart. Then I wouldn't have to be up all night trying to find the ones I put razors in."

He stared out the window at a quiet and shadowed playground beyond the borders of his fenced yard. A gust of wind blew the swings back and forth, causing them to clank against the metal poles.

"Damn those Islams," he said through clenched teeth. "Damn them to hell."



Jessica Edwards

Original Copies
Light **WEIGHT**
awfully nice
Holy **WAR**
Forlorn Hope

Graphic Design Students



James Hughes



Troy Brolin

Lei

Thomas Rain Crowe

for Nan

In a land of flowers
our theme for the week was
"a lei a day."
And so each morning
I presented her with garlands of orchids,
halos of plumeria,
and ropes of ti.
And each night,
she gave me the best rose
of her fragrant sex.

If this had gone on for long,
the islands would have been reduced to
nothing more than their history of
volcanic rock.
Our bodies
wilted garlands withered and pale.
Yet, what joy we brought
to each other's necks
and at night to our bed
with a crashing surf outside
and in the morning a chorale
of thousands of small blue birds.

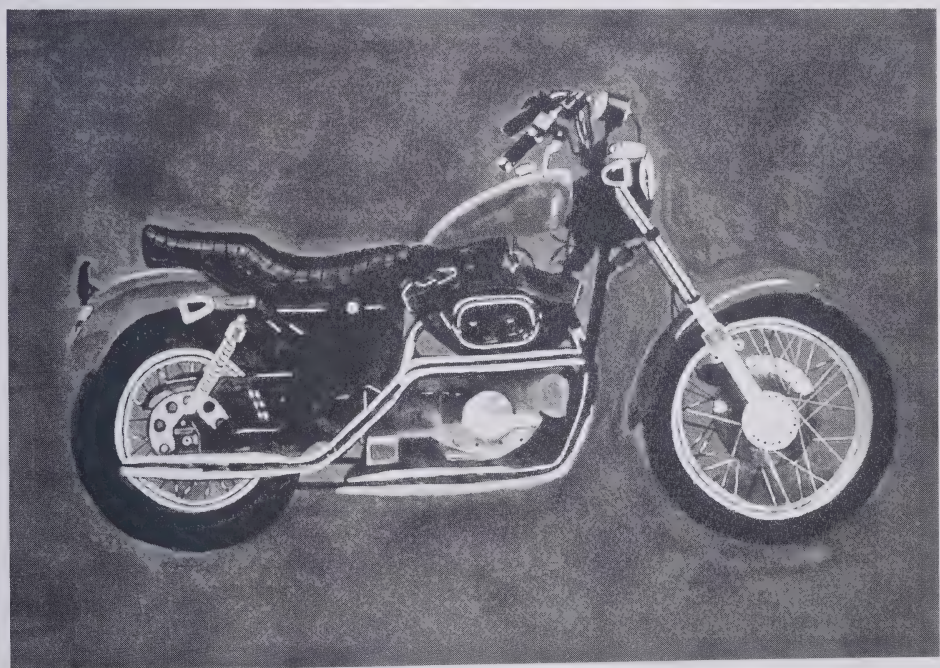
Friends laugh when we tell them
of our week in paradise
and the adage of "a lei a day."
They think it
some Hawaiian humor
we brought home in our kitsch-filled bags.
Ah, but the joke is on them,
as you can see it in our smiles
still at bedtime in our old age.
Memories, like colored tides of climax,
that cover us in petal waves.
The refuge of our place in dreams.

Kona, Hawaii
1999

Family Camp

Martha D. Calloway

Live Oak trees and cricket songs
along a gravel road led us
from steaming asphalt deep
into the coolness of forest bordering
Methodist church camp cabins smothered
with smells of mildew and pine needles
surrounded by a black water-grass speckled
lake where we gathered each summer for
four days pretending to be families
temporarily functional around
campfires and volleyball games
even a bucket-brigade once
after setting fire to the woods
with a weather balloon and as a
full straw moon and smoke reflected
molasses ripple glows on the water's
polished shoreline I and the preacher's
only son stole away to quiet shadows
as the forest burned down around us
and tree bark singed paper thin descended
like powder snowflakes dusting our skin
white with surreality leaving us oblivious
to everything but the anticipation of our first kiss



Jason Morgan

Which Beauty?

Teresa Burrell

Imagine as far as you can see flat terrain and off in the distance, snow-capped mountains. The Southwest, great big, wide open spaces with the antelope, prairie dogs, coyotes, and wild horses as my neighbors. The beauty of the rising sun greeting me on my doorstep in the morning as its wonderful fingers of light spark across a dark sky bringing a warm glow to heart, body, mind, and soul. Awakening each morning to the beauty of the day that lay ahead, watching as the prairie dogs poke their little furry, sleepy heads out of their burrows and stretch in the heat of the sun in preparation for their day of abundant activities. Looking up in time to see a herd of wild horses run with the wind, as if they were children in a great hurry to get to the finish line so that they can claim the coveted prize and looking very much like the holy representative of freedom. Often I have wondered how it would be to run with those elusive creatures and to feel that kind of freedom.

Sitting on the steps, having your first cup of coffee as the brisk, fresh air tickles your nostrils, bringing a sense of contented relaxation to your whole body. Then digging into the chores, counting the tame horses to make sure that none have fallen prey to the coyotes, and when all are accounted for, you put out bales of hay. Absorbed in your work, stopping only to wipe the sweat from your brow, paying little attention to the splendor that surrounds you until the awesome wonder of the impending sunset pulls your focus to its destination, and you finally call a halt to the day's task. Weary and tired, you drag your feet in the sandy soil, kicking up a miniature cloud of dust as you heave a sigh of relief.

As the day winds to a close, you sit on the porch and watch as the shadows of darkness consume the land. Weary yet content, you listen as the night sounds engulf you, and in the distance, you hear the evening song of the coyote, beautiful to hear but so lonesome that it pulls at the invisible strings of your heart.

A land of beauty and enchantment, my New Mexico, but also danger. A place where the raw beauty holds untold enemies, where the coyote can be as stealthy as a thief in the night and steal away the newborn lamb. Also there are birds of terror; that's what I would call them, for I have seen them pluck the eyeballs from an injured horse and pick the meat right off the bone of a fresh wound, paying no heed to the poor unfortunate animal's ear-piercing screams. Yes, indeed, magpies are vicious birds but necessary to the land. I remember one year when it snowed so much that it piled up to six feet, and the temperature dropped to forty-two below zero. The sheep, in their efforts to keep warm, huddled together so tightly that the ones on the inside suffocated to death. It took six trucks working for two days to haul them all to the dump. The magpies and coyotes had their feast even in the horrid conditions of a bone-chilling, mind-numbing winter.

Spring brings wonder to the land as flowers begin to dot the landscape and the green returns, bringing with it a sense of life renewed. But even this can give false hope because a spring snowstorm can bury the beauty, which hath sprung forth, letting it return only when the rays of the sun are sufficient to warm the ground.

With summer comes the rain and the awesome wonder of a thunderstorm. The lightning fairies dance across the valley, ushering in the droplets of rain that will put the dust demons to bed and refresh the air for another day or two. Animals scurry here and there, making preparation for the winter that will undoubtedly come, gathering whatever morsel of food they can find and teaching the spring's new arrivals the art of survival.

Even with such wonder and beauty, New Mexico could not hold my heart, for it longed for the mountains of my native home, North Carolina. I don't know if it is because I was born there or if it was a love for the mountains that called to me. I missed them terribly and was glad when I returned to them. These mountains have a beauty that is all their own, and in my travels, I have found none to match it. The splendor of spring with exquisite flower blossoms pushing forth into the awakening world. Birds in concert announcing to the meadow spring's arrival. Squirrels, chipmunks, and field mice usher their young out to greet the magnificence of the Smoky Mountains; as the morning dew kisses the leaf buds upon the trees, the rays of sunlight wash across the sky, bringing to life all creatures. The light illuminates my room, alerting me that it is time to rise and start to work. The robin's song welcoming me to the day, as I go to the field to work, brings a smile to my face.

The hard work of spring brings summer's rewards: squash, potatoes, corn, peaches, and every other vegetable and fruit one can imagine. The trees have donned their robes of greenery and stand as regal as kings and queens providing shade to their loyal subjects in the heat of the day. Down by the creek, children play, trying to keep cool in the swelter of summer. Steaks on the grill sizzle to perfection as the picnic table is set in preparation for supper. After all have eaten our fill, we sit as evening comes and listen to the whippoorwill, each trying to guess where it is. As darkness descends, the hoot owl calls out into the night, a sound that can raise the hair on the back of your neck, especially on a moonless night. The stars leap into the darkening sky, looking like a relative of the fireflies that dance across the yard, twinkling as if they were diamonds. Relaxing into tranquility and peace only to be greeted by the night song of the katydid.

As autumn approaches, the leaves reveal their hidden colors, and the mountains look like God's canvas with vibrant reds, yellows, and oranges splashing across the meadows and hillsides. Frost on the pumpkins alerts the meadows to the impending chill of winter, and animal activity increases to a fever pitch in an effort to gather all that is needed for winter stores. People, too, begin their harvest in preparation for the hardships that lay ahead.

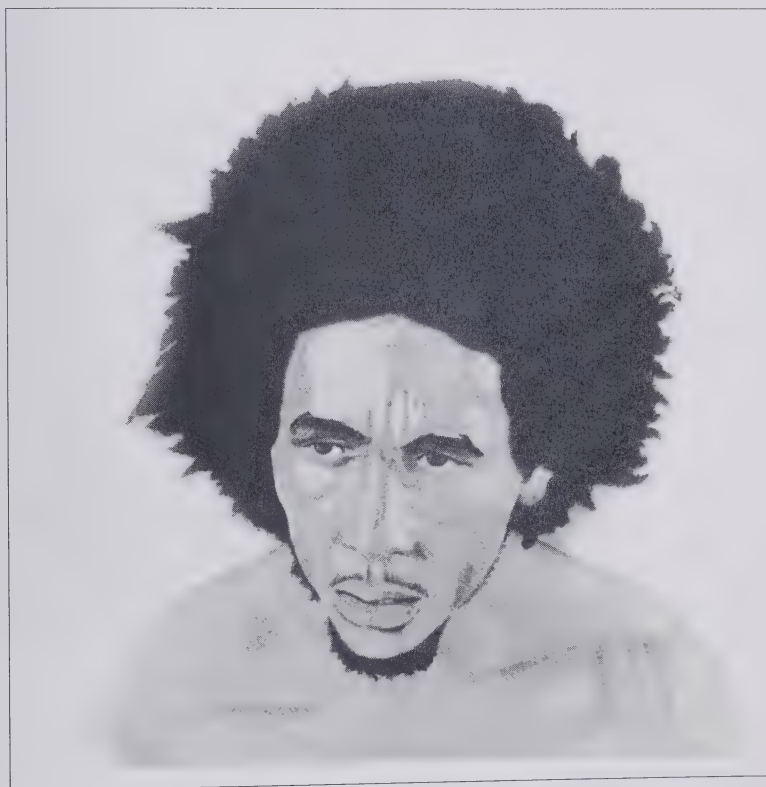
Autumn's coolness transforms into winter's chill, and frost gives way to snow. The animals embark on their winter's sleep, and the pine trees' branches bear the weight of the snowfall. The meadow takes on the pristine color of the virgin, and the snowbirds arrive each day to eat the seeds that you leave as an offering and sing a melody for you that chases away the drums of the season.

Winters in the mountains can be as hard as those in New Mexico. I recall the winter of 1993 when we had a terrible blizzard. Snow piled up to the middle of my door, and I didn't leave the house for almost two weeks. We were without power for four days and got a chance to see how our pioneer forefathers lived. We blocked off all of our other rooms and lived just in the living room by the wood stove with only the candlelight to illuminate the room. It was interesting to see how bored we became without the television to watch, but we found other entertainment such as checkers and cards. We had one tragedy; our hamster Sambo passed away because of heat exhaustion. We forgot to move his cage away from the stove, and he got too hot.

New Mexico has its wide, open-spaced beauty. It is a wild, untamable magnificence that is awesomely breathtaking to see with wonders that can stop one's heart for a second. But my favorite beauty is the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina with their beautiful trees, exquisite meadows and hillsides, babbling brooks, and forest creatures. Wide, open spaces are a wonder that one should see at least once in a lifetime, but to be able to stand on a mountaintop and look into the valley below and take in the splendor that God has created is a soul-saving experience that one must have at all cost.



Susie Adams



Austen Mikulka



Merrie Belle Worley

Theme for Flight

Gene Lominac

Announcing intentions
with bluebird-blue ambition
flash flood, creek rushing blue on blues
converging, diverging expansively

extravagantly soaring blues
not New Orleans
or Beale Street indigo blues
sinking to bottoms of beginnings
crawling over late night losses

but summer-known
sky blues, swimming pool blues
dancing barefoot in lived-in bathing suits
winter wet on summer skins

sitting out a jitterbug number
someone else paid a quarter for
sitting outside the place to be
outside shadowing lights
under stars as cold as metal chairs
reminding us of how complete

and incomplete we are at seventeen
hot dogs dripping Chinese mustard
punctuating shrugged embarrassment of youth
appreciated dryly now

beside blue ruffled petunias in patio planters
blue plastic deck chairs sprawled in
navy blue veins in therapeutic sun
better than commercials
not believed, underscoring nostalgia

sweeter in lasting
RHAPSODY IN BLUE
urging us agelessly
to fly away from winter

Amanda Comes to the Mountain

Jessica Bell

Amanda Lee had launched her nursing career early in life, taking what training was available back then while but a slip of a girl, and winning a fair reputation scarcely out of her teens. It was a good thing, too, for when that no-account Charlie Worthingale she married went west to work on the railroad and neglected to come back, she was able to bring up, quite decently, the children he'd left her with.

Success in her profession grew, and eventually she came to hold the position of Senior Nurse, in charge of all the others at the hospital where she worked. But she never forgot her early days on the farm, and as her years increased, so did her longing for a patch of soil on which to grow vegetables and flowers and fine, fat laying hens. So it was that when an older generation of doctors with whom she had worked in mutual respect began to die off, only to be replaced by whippersnappers not that long out of didies ordering her about, she decided it was high time to retire.

She had bought the place at Locust Gap sight unseen from her butcher, whom she knew to be an honest man since he trimmed his meat of gristle and fat and kept his fingers off the scales whilst he weighed it up. And the butcher—being an honest man—gave her a friendly warning along with the bill of sale: folks where he grew up, he said, didn't take kindly to strangers. Amanda scoffed at that.

At first, the work of patching up the butcher's old home place and laying out her garden kept her too busy to notice; but as spring warmed up to summer and nobody called and the passers-by she hailed from the porch merely ducked their heads, it began to rankle a bit. She determined to take matters in hand.

Shortly thereafter, the postman arrived at the mailbox one noon to find the lady of the house waiting by the locust stump with a mug of freshly brewed coffee and a hot apple fried pie. During the conversation that ensued while Mr. Farnaby sat on the running board enjoying his refreshments, Amanda let it slip that until quite recently she had been a person of considerable importance at a fine big-city hospital, wise in the ways of modern medicine and skilled at treating the sick. After pausing a moment to give Mr. Farnaby a long, significant look, she added that even though now in retirement, she felt it her Christian duty to offer counsel and healing to any of her neighbors who might be in need. Mr. Farnaby responded with an understanding wink and resumed his interrupted rounds, whistling as he went.

The news traveled swiftly along the postman's route, spread out in all directions, and eventually made its way up Chillytoe Creek where, as luck would have it, Burlene Bascomb's least one had a risin' in its ear. The infant squalled for three days running, even after the thing had burst, til Junior Bascomb, Burlene's man, vowed he'd take to the woods—or to drink—if she didn't get it hushed. Since Junior had strong inclinations to do both at the same time, causing his wife no end of grief, she bundled up her courage along with the baby and walked the three miles to Locust Gap.

Amanda heard them coming and was waiting in her chair on the porch, medicine chest at hand, ready to take charge. When Burlene handed over the Bascomb heir, she flattened it out across her lap with such awesome expertise, the little thing stopped yelling out of sheer surprise. She peered into its ear for a time, meanwhile directing a soothing stream of chatter at Burlene, who was standing on first one bare foot and then the other, poised to snatch up her child and run if she didn't like the look of things.

Her examination complete, Amanda took out a brown glass bottle (Burlene, reporting the miracle later, called it "parry-gollick") and squeezed two drops of a liquid it held into the crimson ear. The patient's only protest was a drowsy whimper. Still, Amanda had never believed in half measures: she cut a small white tablet in two, mashed it up with a teaspoon of sugar, and tied it in a bit of cloth to make a little knob, which she deftly poked in the baby's mouth on the crest of a yawn.

In less than twenty minutes from the time she had arrived, Burlene was headed home again, her sleeping babe draped over her arm, the sugar-tit clamped firmly between its pink gums. Burlene made several stops along the way.

Small wonder, then, that two weeks later when Mr. Cecil Collins' axe head flew off and clipped him one up-side the skull, his frantic family heisted him up on Buster, the mule, and hustled him over to Locust Gap in a straggly, stair-step group, the older children shepherding the little ones along.

Mr. Cecil arrived on the doorstep looking such a bloody mess, even Amanda's stout heart quailed. But once she'd got him in the chair and poked about a bit, she knew she was equal to the task. She couldn't find the slightest dent in Mr. Cecil's skull; the major damage appeared to be nothing worse than the gash that parted his scalp. Nevertheless, her expression grew even more grave as she got out all her instruments and her best professional manner.

And then, before ten pairs of frightened eyes—eleven, counting Buster's—she cleaned the wound and painted it red and stitched it up with a linen thread. With some of the blood sponged off him, it wasn't long til Mr. Cecil was looking nearly human, never mind a little pale. Shakily he got to his feet and asked how much he owed.

"Why, not a blessed thing," Amanda replied. "I'd do the same for any neighbor." She would be much obliged, though, if anybody could tell her where she might get ahold of a few sweet potato slips to start her yam patch with.

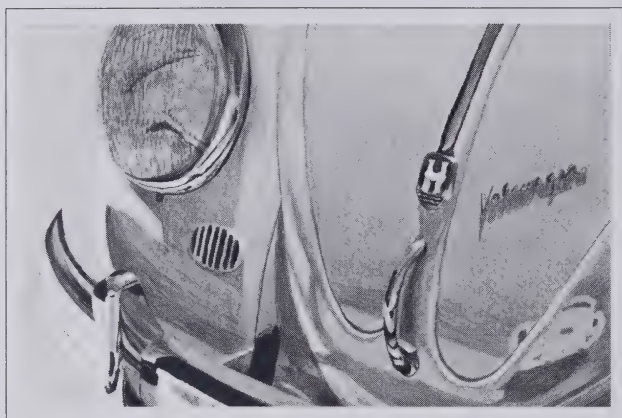
Enough potato plants to bury the place in vines were discovered on the porch at daybreak next morning; and after that, folks for miles around began to come by and visit, most of them bringing some neighborly gift—a string of trout, a clutch of duck eggs—as insurance against future disasters. By year's end, Amanda was solidly planted in the soil of the mountain community that was her chosen home, sharing in its sorrows and joys, right pleased with the way it had all turned out.



Troy Brolin



Jessica Edwards



Travis Gresham

Summer of 74

Martha D. Calloway

It was summer 1974
 Back when I could get
 An early morning beer buzz and enjoy it
 At my friend Tami's house whose mom was a nurse
 And working twelve hours shifts so
 We spent nights drinking Mateus from the bottle
 And cruising old witch's road or
 John Anderson drive where you could see the face of
 Jimi Hendrix in an old live oak tree
 That hung across the road like a mossed arch
 While we cranked beach boys and led zeppelin tunes
 Into the salty early morning fog that thickened like cotton
 Across the thin peninsula that snaked between
 The ocean on one side and the river on the other
 Not knowing now how we managed each day to catch sunrise
 And surf the smooth morning breaks at the beach
 Getting there in an old white vw bug with
 Surfboards hanging out the windows and smoking
 These funky Jamaican leaf cigarettes tied with string
 That tasted worse than Tami's mom's no-filter
 Lucky strikes but looked a lot cooler



Susie Adams



Aaron Patton

Escape

Marilyn Melissa Murphy

Dirty dishes, dirty floors
Dirty mother, dirty whore

People stare and judge me
By my mother's paradigm
Once a beauty but now...
One tremendous bulge

Trailer trash, street trash
Needle trash, back of the car seat trash

People stare and shake their heads and tell others
Got a new boyfriend
Look! They're getting in the car...
Just like her mother

Nosy folks, story spreaders
Bullshit talkers, spirit shredders

Quixotic words can charm the innocent of hearts
Then quickly turn to grinders
That makes corn beef hash...
Out of the heart

Father's words, father's laws
Father's hate, father's lies

People gawk at father through hate filled eyes
Sorry bastard
Beats his wife and...
Takes his daughter for long rides

Boyfriend's love, boyfriend's life
Boyfriend's ring, boyfriend's future wife

People stop and stare as we drive away
Just married painted on the car and they say
She said she would and now she has...
Escaped the poor class lifelong brand



Doris Melton



Chris Kellam

Jamaican Triptych

Sabrina Kumin-Kumar

I. Riverton City (Kingston, Jamaica)

it's one of those things that really wasn't funny

but you couldn't help but laugh

(because it's so perfect,

and what else can you do?)

on the left, just off the highway

a sort of shanty-town thing

that looked like a landfill

or a set for a bad Japanese sci-fi movie

or a picture out of LIFE magazine

complete with

half-naked children and dogs running in packs

charcoal smoke from cooking fires

tiny corrugated tin-oven shacks

chickens goats clotheslines dust graffiti

and vultures (no joke) circling overhead.

It seemed too clichéd to be real

enter us: 25 girls from an elite southern women's college

in an air-conditioned chariot

(with PLEASURE TOURS on the side in big orange letters)

armed with compassion, determination, high hopes,

crayons, guitars, and toothbrushes

(toothbrushes, for God's sake!

for those jack-o-lantern smiles?

Sister said they'd probably sell them on the black market anyway)

we patted heads colored clapped hands wiped noses hugged sang

carried barefoot children over the rocks

shared a kool-aid and peanut-cookie communion

fell in love with them

with loving and being loved

with believing we could change things

left, frustrated

wanting to do more

(what did we do?)

smelling their sweat and smoke and our perfume

waving to the children that trailed behind the bus

(barefoot on the rocks)

like cans on a newlywed's car

returned to campus

hardly believing it was on the same planet

wanting with every beat of our hearts to forget

and not to

knowing that telling the stories

is just as important as going

answering a string-to-the-moon of well-meant questions—

(ones we still ask ourselves)

"how was it? is it as bad as we've heard?

did you help many people? what did you do?"

and what can I do but laugh
and hand them toothbrushes

II. Bellevue Mental Institution

crescent eyes become full moons
as we twine among you
gingerly sincerely condescendingly
shaking your hands
"good morning!"
singing "if you're happy and you know it"
delighted, touched as you sing for us
"amazing grace"

we pity you
glorify you
distance ourselves from you—
discarded rag dolls
complacent against the cloths that tie you to cages
screaming pleading drooling whispering silent

fear tears at us
we cling to the fact that we can leave
we are just here to help a little
we are more fortunate, are free

so we walk on
and shake our heads
at peeling paint, brambly courtyards, ill-fitting clothes
open sewers that empty into the
ocean, capricious just beyond the fence
taunting
egrets, white as your walls once were
haunting
we egrets appear and disappear
quick as hallucinations
(bound by gravity)
white capped nurses forever ride you
you dark, turbulent waters
(tethered to the moon)

III. Litany

by the waters of Jamaica,
we sat down and wept,
saying
"how can we sing the Lord's song in this place?
how can we say 'trust divine order' and 'God knows best'
when we think we could do a better job?
how can we sing 'Yahweh is a loving God'
when we feel that God must have forgotten these people
and can't possibly love them as much as we do?
how can we look at them and say that God answers prayers?
how can we see God's hands at work
when we think of those people that were shot here?
how can we go back to classes and meetings and dances and...?"

how can we ever change things? We are so young, so few...?
 how, in the midst of all the misery we see,
 can we sing of a city of God that is here now?
 how can we dare to hope that a few hours of love
 can begin to heal a lifetime of loneliness?
 how can we tear down our walls enough
 to let them hear us too?
 how can we hand them promises of heavenly feasts
 knowing they're hungry now
 and faith doesn't fill an empty belly?
 how can we cry, 'Abba! Daddy?'
 and believe You hold these children in your hand
 (and us, Lord, and us?)
 how can we sing 'kumbayah' wondering if You will?
 how can we learn to see life in the face of death,
 hope in the face of despair,
 wealth in the face of poverty?
 how can we look at them and see Your face?
 oh, God, how can we go back there tomorrow
 and sing Your songs for them
 when your hearts are weeping"
 pardon me while I put my
 insides back inside.



Matt Dellinger



Stephani Fajardo

After Thoughts

Betty Holt

It's not in silent afternoons
That I miss you
Nor in evenings quietened by
The passing hues of twilight.

It's not from mountaintops
That I look for you
Nor in swirling rivers do I
Seek for your reflection.

Not even in the snow,
Gently falling, or the rain,
Quickly pounding, do I wish
That you could be here.

For I can be alone with me.

It's rather in crowded rooms
That I search for you
Where once I found you
Standing tall above the others.

It's in throngs of dancers
Gaily clapping, that I want to
Grab your cowboy hat
And toss it all around.

It's in myriads of flowers
That I want to buttercup your chin
Or lie laughing amidst your knees
Blowing dandelions away.

For sometimes it's hard for me in numbers.

It's not so much in times of trouble
That I need you
For I can recall the words
You'd say to ease my pain.

It's not in church
That I'm reminded of you
But whenever I feel close to God
I know you'd understand.

It's not even my usual self
Who writes of you
But one who was inspired
To put your memory in print.

For you do have a place with me.

It's in times of discovery
That I want to share with you
Some gleaning of my psyche
Or stirring in my soul.

It's always in magical moments
That I'd like to whisk you away
To join my traveling caravan
And see the world with me.

It's when I feel removed from you
I want to wrap you close around
And reassure my fragile self
That nothing's really changed.

For once I care, I always do.



Joshua Faust

Places for Memories

Joyce Foster

What must I do
 with these memories,
place them in
 bits of lace
pin them to
 my camisole?
Should I bury them in
 the wet sand
on which we had walked
 letting the cold
water crawl up
 and over them
washing them out to sea?
 Or should I slip them
into an unread book
 on a high shelf
to gather dust
 occasionally to touch
and wonder why
 keep them
cluttering my life?

Memories

Christine Hubinger

In California
I liked the eucalyptus grove,
the cool morning fog hanging in tatters
halfway down the air,
the straight smooth boles
of eucalyptus trees, shaggy tops high in the fog
and the great horned owl
tall on a limb
silent
solemn head turning
watching
me pass on the path below

I liked the sound of the wind chimes
in the pine tree by the back steps
when we lived in the old Airstream
in the sand lot
behind Joanne and David's store

Once I slept under the fig tree
in Karen's backyard in town
and sweet sticky fruit
plopped to the ground around me
all night long

I lay in the night awake
in Charity's house
on a grass mat
on the smooth wood floor
listening
as Serina the cat
crunched the bones of a mouse
under the woodstove by my feet

Memories of beauty
from a time of hunger and pain
a moment of peace
in a life lived in turmoil
and left behind

Like a hand cupped
to dip into
a mountain stream
cold sweet water
lifted to the mouth

I remember



Susie Adams

Lost and Missing

Joyce Foster

The scarf you took
 from around my shoulders
 you say you found
 on a nearby table.
 My earring where was it?
 My heart is missing still.
 Did you look among
 the rumpled covers
 or under pillows?
 Could it have fallen
 on the floor?
 Perhaps I should call
 to see if it was found
 and placed in a box marked
 "incidentals left behind."
 Or did you happen
 to slip it
 into your jacket
 thinking to return it
 someday?



Erik McQueen



Josh Sutton

The Mouse in the Jar

Hal Whisnant

Wendle Kreibs put the final coat of paint on the water heater he found at the junkyard. He stepped back to appraise his work and decided it looked authentic. Pipes ran from the top, down its side, and into the wall. All the connections were soldered as if water might run through them. The top was removable but had the appearance of being tack welded in place. He cut off the top of the tub inside for easy filling, wondering if the contents would react with the metal. He decided to wait and see.

After getting a juice glass from the kitchen, he bent down and stuck it under the drain spigot. He poured it half full, took a deep breath, and threw the clear liquid down his throat. Letting out the breath, he peered into the bottom of the glass and smacked his lips. It tasted fine. It was choice product, some of his best.

He was about to bend down for another taste when a mouse ran across the window ledge and into a hole. Wendle walked to the kitchen and came back with a Mason jar and a piece of bread. He placed the jar on a step ladder and leaned it against the ledge so that the mouse could see the bread inside when it passed that way again. It was lunch time, so Wendle left to make a sandwich.

His lunch finished and the dishes done, Wendle went back to check the jar. The mouse was inside, his little feet scrambling against the slope of the glass. He tried jumping, but the angle was too steep, and he hit his head and slid back to the bottom of the glass. Wendle bent down with his face close to the jar and tapped it with a finger.

"You're the one's been eating holes in my bread."

Wendle picked up the jar and turned it, looking at the mouse from all sides. He tilted the jar too upright, and the mouse jumped out the top, but Wendle shifted the glass and caught him. He placed his hand over the opening as a lid.

"No, no, little fella. You're going to the woods. You've eaten the last of my bread you're going to eat."

He took the jar into the kitchen and set it on the table, using a book as a lid. The mouse stood on his hind legs and sniffed the sides of the jar. He began jumping into the book. Wendle dropped in a Brazil nut to settle him, and after a few minutes, the mouse, resigning himself to his fate, began eating. Wendle pulled up a chair, sat down, and watched.

By late afternoon, the mouse had many more nuts and a soft bed of cotton balls. Wendle stepped out on the porch with another half glass of white liquor.

He looked out over his yard and down across the road toward Stamey's pasture. There was nothing pleasant about Jim's pasture with its black and white cows and the way the fence curved along the edge of the woods. Maybe it was because it was Jim's pasture. He was Wendle's third or fourth cousin; they weren't sure which. Wendle always thought Jim was like Nathaniel of the Bible, a man, "indeed, in whom there is no guile."

He drank down the last of the glass and set it on the railing. His friends would be coming soon. They wanted to buy his liquor or get it free, if they could.

He didn't expect any trouble from the law, but he had been careful. The still was hidden a mile back in the woods on Mr. Falston's land, and he was sure the water heater back in his house was a good hiding place. There was a time when he didn't have to be so cautious. His operation wasn't big enough to concern the federal authorities, and local law enforcement only raided stills before elections. Even then, the object of the exercise was informed beforehand so that he could take his best copper and most of his stash, always leaving enough white liquor for the newspaper to write about.

It was hard to say whether Wendle made the best liquor in the county or folks just liked him. He had a large clientele either way; even the High Sheriff's wife was a customer. One Sunday she came by late in the evening, still dressed for church. She seemed upset and wanted to stay for a drink. Wendle's kindness would never allow him to turn away someone in real need, and in thirty minutes, they were feeling the effect. Two hours later they were past caring, and three hours later they were asleep, Wendle on the floor and she on the divan.

Wendle thought nothing of it until his still was raided without notice, and he was hauled before the Judge. He was given six months in the county jail for the manufacture and sale of an illegal substance.

He took it as well as could be expected. For the first few weeks, he slandered the Sheriff in poems on the walls of his cell, which met with much approval from his cellmates. Later he repented and was sorry he wrote them. It was the Sheriff's wife, after all, who was the culprit. She engineered the whole thing. She used him as a patsy, just to aggravate her husband. He gave long speeches on the nature of evil and the snares of corrupt women. At first this too was met with favor, but his cellmates soon grew weary of his ranting and made him stop. After a week of quiet reflection, he decided things were the way they were. Being angry about them was pointless. He spent the next few months reading the Bible Jim brought him. The sixth Psalm was his favorite.

A few of Wendle's relatives who held some standing in the county pleaded for his pardon, and after three months, Wendle was allowed to go home. The Judge gave him stern warning that he was to be on his best behavior, and if he broke any law, he would finish his sentence. Wendle promised, and it was an honest promise, for as Wendle stood in the court room, the whole citizenship of the thing took hold of him. The American flag was stanchioned on one side of the Judge's bench, and the state flag stood on the other. The county seal hung in the middle on an oak-paneled wall. People were there. Some, like Wendle, were there to see the Judge; others were there just to watch. At that moment, Wendle was the center of attention in something great, beyond himself, something affecting the whole, sovereign and unconditional. That, and the realization he could go home, caused a lump in Wendle's throat. The Judge gave a fine speech too, but it went a little long, and Wendle began to lose track of what he said. But he got enough of it to feel a great deal of pride at being part of it. He felt that way until he walked down the Courthouse steps, when he remembered being arrested, against a law that was unfairly enforced, all because the Sheriff couldn't handle his wife. In less than a week, Wendle was making liquor again.

Down by the road, his lean-to garage was half filled with old tires, dismantled lawnmowers, sheets of tin, and part of a cement mixer. Much of it spilled out and around the garage and into the yard. A stack of lumber lay against the house, and several ladders stuck out from under the porch.

To some Wendle's home was a junkyard. To him it was filled with all valuable items, things thrown out, items that Wendle made useful. The walkway to the house was lined with figurines that he repaired with plaster and paint. An old brass bed frame, buried to its rails, served as a planter for tulips that were just coming up, and a bathtub, continuously filled with water from

the branch beside the house, was home to five goldfish he had won at the county fair. It was guarded by a pink flamingo with two heads he made for fun. He had not found a use for all the things that lay in and around the garage and underneath the house, but he was sure he eventually would.

Around the yard, a number of posts were stuck in the ground with radiator fans attached so that when the wind blew, they would spin. Each post was carved with its own design, and some had movable workings operated by the fan. His favorite was a man riding a bicycle with a little dog in the front basket. His yard had become something of an attraction. Travelers passing through often stopped to look and take photographs, and some offered money for the things. He refused to part with any of them, but he was glad for the company.

Wendle stepped out into the yard and took a seat in the metal lawn rocker. There were five chairs all arranged in a semi-circle. A medium-sized white oak stood over them, its buds just beginning to show.

Broady Jenkins, John and Tom Beauman, and Bill Foster all showed at about the same time. They were all long-time friends, but Broady was the only one who visited Wendle during his imprisonment. Broady visited as much as Jim did, two or three times a week. He didn't hold it against them. They would pay for their liquor. Broady would drink for free.

Wendle greeted them warmly, and they immediately asked about the liquor. He told them it was of high quality, and there was more than enough to satisfy their needs. Smiles broke out at this announcement, eyes turning toward one another and heads nodding. With the thought of the evening to come, a veil of relaxation fell over the group. They all took seats in metal chairs under the oak tree. They talked of the weather, what they would plant in their gardens, how many rows of beans and corn they would put in; potatoes, tomatoes, and okra were also discussed.

No one talked about Wendle's recent troubles with the law, but Broady made an unrelated comment concerning the hypocrisy of the Sheriff. This caused the group to look at Wendle. He brushed it away as if it were a gnat, got up, and waved a finger toward the garage.

"Ya'll ain't seen my go-cart."

"You got another toy, Wendle?" John asked. He stood up. "Let's see it."

And, without waiting for Wendle, started walking toward the garage. The rest of the group, with some groans at being stirred from their rest after a hard day's work, slowly followed.

"What in the world have you got on there?" Tom asked.

Wendle smiled with just a little pride and arched his eyebrows. "Two chainsaw motors."

"We can see that," Bill said. "You got it running?"

"I got it cranked this morning. I just ain't drove it yet."

"Where you plan on driving it?" John asked, bending down to pull the throttle cable, checking its action.

"Around here, I guess. The yard's too bumpy though. I think I need a flat place like a dirt road or asphalt," Wendle said.

They all looked at one another, then at the lonely state highway passing in front of the house, then to Wendle. Wendle was looking at the highway too. It crossed their minds that driving an unlicensed vehicle on a state road was illegal, but they also knew that thinking like that was counterproductive.

"I'll drive it," Broady said, looking at Wendle out of the corners of his eyes.

"It's Wendle's go-cart," John said. "He ought to be the one to drive it."

The others agreed that driving it a little way wouldn't cause any harm. It was logic Wendle couldn't refute. They pulled the go-cart into the driveway.

The engines started with one pull each. Wendle looked up at his friends and said, "I'll just go as far as the Stameys'."

They all nodded, agreeing it was a safe distance. Wendle hit the throttle, the tires threw up gravel, and the contraption fishtailed as it grabbed asphalt. His friends ran out to watch from the edge of the road.

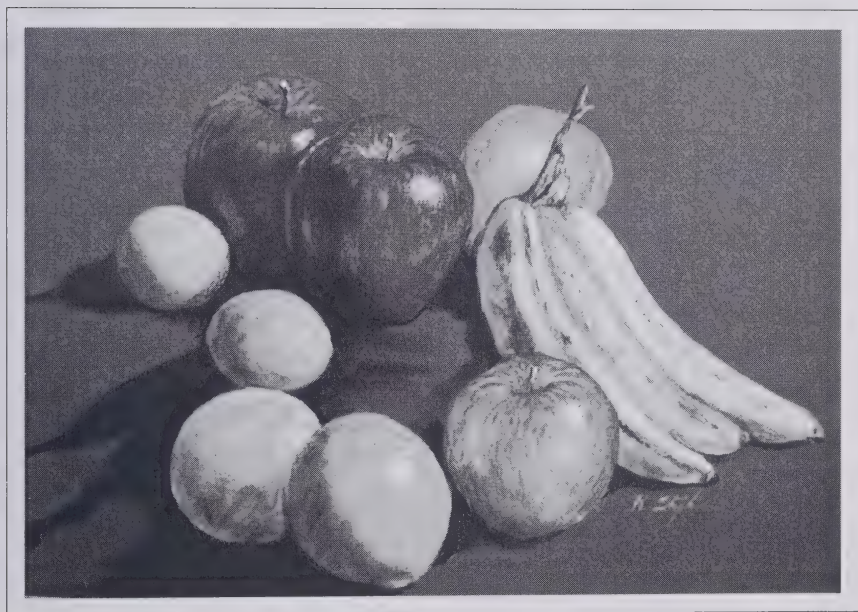
In seconds he was in front of Jim's house. Jim was out by his mailbox fetching the evening paper, and Wendle waved as he passed. Jim waved back. Wendle took note that Jim had an odd, flat look on his face and was looking behind Wendle. When Wendle glanced back, he saw a bumper, a grill, and the word **FORD**. He knew the car well and without a thought or a pause, pushed the throttle as far as it would go.

Wendle pulled away from the cruiser, and it looked for a moment as if he would make his escape, but the Sheriff quickly closed the gap. Wendle, however, began switching lanes to check the Sheriff's attempts to pass. The Sheriff checked his speed to keep from running over Wendle. Every move was matched with a countermove. The go-cart was not as fast but was nimble, and Wendle seemed to be the more skillful driver.

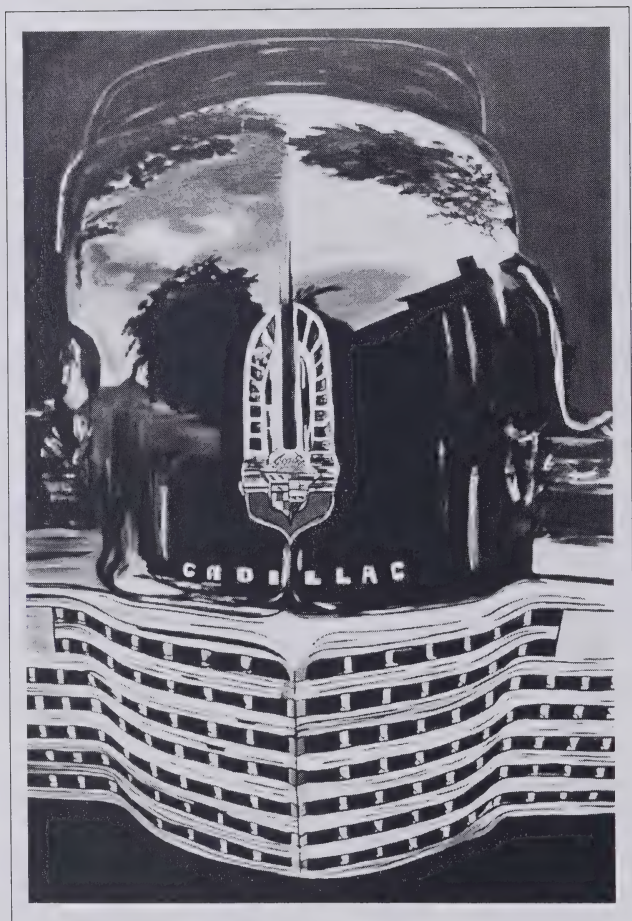
The boys in the driveway hooted, hollered, and whistled as go-cart and cruiser disappeared over the first rise, then reappeared over the next, disappeared again, reappeared, then disappeared over the last rise.

They all stood waiting in the driveway. Occasionally they threw a wave to Jim Stamey who was standing vigil by the mailbox. They speculated that Wendle might make it to the South Carolina line. As time passed, it seemed that might have happened. It was starting to get late, and Broady said if Wendle could hold out until it was dark, he would have a good chance to get away. They all agreed. It had been more than thirty minutes since the chase had begun, and that was a good sign; but as the last of the sun was disappearing over the last rise, the Sheriff's car slowly broke the horizon.

The Sheriff slowed as he passed Jim, then almost stopped as if he were going to turn in the driveway where the boys were standing. But he merely wanted to show off his catch. The go-cart was sticking halfway out of the trunk, and Wendle was in the back seat. Wendle didn't look up as they passed. He knew his friends would make out fine the rest of the evening. He knew they would find the liquor in the water heater. It didn't matter. He thought, "Things are the way they are...." He only hoped someone would let the mouse out of the jar.



Roger Stephens



Anna Kernicki



Matt Dellinger



Sonya McMillan

Death on State Road 1027

Gene Lominac

Celebrating ripeness and good of it
a key-wound pickup truck
defied the unrelenting curve in the road
and won
another opportunity to ride beyond it.

One unsuspecting
perfect pumpkin
fell to undignified discontinuance!
Startled seeds and stringy pith
splashed out

like entrails of some naive night creature
unadapted to automotive arrogance.

A yellow-jaundiced butterfly
investigated shards—
broken promises exposed in death's obscenity

excused itself and flew
to less definitive disgust of horse manure
on the shrugging shoulder.
Adolescently
disturbed, a screaming-ego-red Trans Am

presumed delight in furthering the hurt.
Unfinished anguish pulped into the pavement
shadowing itself
as if life were cultivated purposely
for harvest and holiday smear.

The Bedouin Cannonball

Thomas Rain Crowe

for Jem Williford

In Turkish zikr
 they own the evening
 with whirling and something more than dance.
 With chants, singing, and a dozen Bedouin drums
 filling the hall—
 while the women trill with their tongues,
 and the men move in circles like great apes
 breathing hard and beating their chests:
A-lah, A-lah, A-lah, A-lah
 all night long...

After hours of almost ecstasy,
 the shaykh turns the spiraling circle in.
 Keeps winding the snake-like lines into
 a tight ball of bodies around the man that leads.
 Outside the windows of the hall,
 unnamed things move about in the dark.
 Young boys press their faces against the glass—

The drums get louder, the trills hit a
 higher pitch. The floor bends and springs
 to the absence of bodies that keep leaving the ground.
 And in a single last *Allah*
 the roof lifts off like a rocket
 of Islam onyx into the Sufi sky.



Ashley Delashmit



Doris Melton

The Night of the Living Cake

Paul Crockett

My name is Henry Smith, I am a perfectly normal twelve-year-old, and I live in the pretty average town of Melvin, IL. Last year I made friends with a boy about my age whose name is Joe Pagoda. Now, before I go on, I need to tell you a little about Joe. He himself is pretty normal, but the rest of the family is...well...kind of strange.

His mother's name is Barbara, and she is six feet tall, wears horn-rim glasses, and has a really ugly orange beehive hairdo. She's always feeding her family different kinds of really weird health food, and is always telling members of her family to "Remember poor Uncle Stanley," even though I've never been able to find out what happened to Uncle Stanley.

Joe's father, whose name is Victor, has slick black hair, and is always wearing a black suit and tie. Every time I've seen him, he's playing an accordion. He's horrible at it, which may explain why he and Barbara don't always seem to get along. Worst of all, Victor insists on making *everything* an educational experience for his children, usually by asking them strange questions.

I've never heard Joe's older brother, Carl, say anything recognizable. He's always mumbling and scribbling something in a notebook. Maybe he's a writer or something.

Not counting Barbara, Rita (Joe's little sister) is the only girl in the family. She has long blond hair, always wears sunglasses, and seems to think that she's a famous movie star. She claims to have starred in dozens of movies, none of which I've ever heard of before.

The youngest member of this unusual family is Chuckie, a bratty little five-year-old who is the most dangerous kid I've ever met. He always asks for automatic weapons for Christmas and his birthday.

The only pet in Joe's family is Fang, an annoying little dog who enjoys biting people.

Now that I've introduced you to Joe's family, I can get on with my story.

Joe and I became good friends pretty quickly. In fact, several weeks after I met him, he invited me to his birthday party. It turned out to be one of the strangest experiences of my whole life....

It was about seven in the evening on October third, and it was raining hard. I had gotten an invitation in the mail a day or two ago, and this was the night of the party. I walked up to the solid oak door (it was an old house), and knocked loudly.

A few seconds later, I heard Chuckie shriek, "MOM, HE'S HERE! SHOULD I OPEN THE DOOR?"

"Of course, you should open it," Barbara replied. "Remember what happened to poor Uncle Stanley when he didn't open a door quickly enough!"

Chuckie apparently got the hint. The door flew open, and I stepped inside. As usual, their dining room was dimly lit and looked rather spooky.

"Hi, Mrs. Pagoda!" I called into the kitchen.

"Hello, Hank," replied Barbara, who calls me Hank, even though I hate it. "We can start as soon as I finish icing this cake."

I was surprised—I knew Barbara well enough to know that she considered cake "junk food," but I guess a birthday was an extra-special occasion. I put my present on the table and noticed that I appeared to be the only guest. This didn't surprise me, because I was practically Joe's only friend.

Eventually Joe, Carl, Rita, and Chuckie came in and sat down. "Greetings," said Rita. "I suppose you'll be wanting my autograph?"

"Rita, for the three hundredth time, NO!" I replied firmly.

Carl murmured and jotted something down in his notebook.

Just then, Victor sidled in playing a lively and very annoying polka on his ever-present accordion. "Well, hello there, Fred," he said. Victor can never remember my name.

Presently Barbara came in with a round, chocolate layer cake that looked a little lopsided.

"Can I light the candles, Mom?" Chuckie yelled. "I want to practice for when I get my flame-thrower!"

"Of course not," replied Barbara. "Remember what happened to poor Uncle Stanley when he tried to light candles by himself!" Barbara put the cake on the table. "Ready to sing?" she asked.

"Happy b—" we began.

"Before we sing, Barbara dear, I must remind you again that we're out of tuna," interrupted Victor, who enjoys anything with tuna fish in it.

"You know I haven't bought any tuna for seventeen years, you nasty old man," snapped the woman in question. "You know I don't like you eating that unhealthy stuff!"

We tried again. "Happy birthday to you—"

"Then what have I been putting in my sandwiches all this time?" asked Victor, playing a loud and discordant note on his accordion.

"Tofu paste," said Barbara smugly.

"*Tofu paste?*" said Victor, looking as if he'd just sat in something disgusting.

"We'll talk about it later!" snapped Barbara. "Let's finish singing!"

"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy b—"

"I have to go to the bathroom!" announced Chuckie.

We had several more interruptions, but we eventually managed to finish singing "Happy Birthday" to Joe. Barbara was just about to cut the cake when I noticed something strange. *The cake was moving!*

"Aw, Mom!" complained Joe, seeming to take it all in stride. "Is this another one of your plots to make me hate junk food?"

However, I think even he was surprised when the cake leapt off the plate, scooted down the hall, and disappeared up the stairs, all the while screaming, "I'm free! I'm free!"

"Hey! The cake's escaping!" I yelled.

"Help! Call security!" screamed Rita.

"Oh, boy! Someone catch it!" giggled Chuckie.

We leaped out of our chairs and ran after the fleeing cake.

"Now, children," Victor began, "what kind of mathematical formula would we use to determine how fast the cake was moving?"

"Moving, shmoving, you horrid old man," growled Barbara. "We need to catch that thing! I paid all of \$2.79 for that cake mix!" (Sometimes I wonder why Barbara and Victor ever got married.)

"It went upstairs! Let's go!" yelled Joe, breaking the momentary silence.

"Right!" I replied.

"Mmmmmhmmmm," mumbled Carl, scribbling furiously.

We all thundered upstairs, into another hall.

"Be careful, children," cautioned Victor, playing a mournful sounding melody on his accordion, "that cake may be dangerous. Do any of you remember what you've read about handling dangerous objects?"

No one paid any attention. We crept down the dark, gloomy hallway. It felt strange knowing that a cake could be watching us.

"Maybe it's hiding in here," I suggested, pointing to a closet door.

"NO!" screamed Chuckie. "DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR! THAT'S WHERE I KEEP MY—" I opened it. There was a huge crash, and thousands of clear, round objects roared out, knocking me down. "—marble collection!" Chuckie finished, too late.

"Why does he have a marble collection?" I asked Joe groggily as he helped me to my feet.

"It's ammunition for his slingshot collection," explained Joe.

"Now, children," said Victor, "we need to clean up this mess. If each of you can pick up seventy-five marbles a minute, and there are seven thousand, nine hundred, and three marbles, how long will it take to—"

"Later!" snapped Barbara. "We have to catch that cake! Did anybody see where it went?"

"No," said Joe, "but I think I heard something in Chuckie's room. Come on!"

Chuckie's room looked exactly like I thought it would. Model airplanes hung on string all over the place, and the walls were plastered with posters for violent movies. The floor was covered with a thick layer of dust and green plastic army men.

"Close the door," commanded Barbara. "If that cake is in here, I don't want it getting out!"

"Wait until I tell my agent about this!" Rita giggled nervously. "It would make a great movie!"

We shut the door and started searching. For the first five minutes, all we found was about three months' worth of dirty socks. But then, as I was under the bed, pushing army men out of the way, Rita screamed, "AAAAAAAH! There's something under Chuckie's covers, and it's *moving!*"

I tried to leap up but banged my head on the underside of the bed. Rita screamed again, and I heard, "You'll never take me alive!" I crawled out from under the bed just in time to see the enraged cake breaking a hole in the door with Chuckie's baseball bat.

"See, Mom," Chuckie panted as we all took off again after the cake, "if you'd gotten me a rocket launcher, or even a machine gun, that cake would be history!"

"We're trying to *catch* the cake," I muttered, "not *kill* it!"

"Hmm. Arrrmgmmhm," moaned Carl, writing something in his notebook.

Victor began playing "Stars and Stripes Forever." Down the hall, I heard a bloodcurdling screech. The cake had become ensnared in Chuckie's marble collection! This allowed us to catch up, but the marbles caused us almost as much trouble as they had for the cake.

"Gimme my bat back, you dumb cake!" yelled Chuckie and began throwing marbles at the crazed confection.

"No, Chuckie!" warned Barbara. "Remember what happened to poor Uncle Stanley when he tried to throw marbles at a cake!"

Chuckie ignored her. Confused, and pelted by marbles, the cake dropped the bat and leapt to the banister of the stairs. We watched helplessly as the cake slid down the banister, jumped off the bottom, and landed right on top of Fang! The cake screamed, Fang snarled, and Barbara yelled, "My beautiful cake!"

Fang growled to himself, licked what was left of the cake off the floor, and waddled off down the hall.

"Now, children," Victor said, seeing another opportunity to spread knowledge, "why is chocolate cake bad for Fang?"

"It took me all day to make that cake!" screamed Barbara, grabbing the baseball bat. "When I catch that dog, he's going to have a lot more to worry about than chocolate!"

As she took off after Fang, I decided that this might be a good time to leave.

"Don't worry," Joe shouted after me as I headed for the door, "maybe we can just buy a cake next time!"

Not wanting to offend Joe, I didn't tell him that I wasn't planning to be there next time. At least I'd have the whole year to think of a tactful excuse.



Kym Lutz



Roger Stephens



Chris Kellam



Erik McQueen

Untitled

Kathy S. de Cano

Look! Life is beautiful.
The trees have pointed
their black arms toward the sky
and are calling to the wind
to start the dance in celebration
of the sunset.

The night sheds some of its darkness
for the nuptials in progress.
Moon has donned her wedding dress,
silver like the stars in her Milky Way veil.
Round and pregnant with passion,
she calls to Sun, whose love is light
reflected on her broad, bold face.

The world is wonderful.
Unseen creatures mate in the mist,
and the grass is kissed
with dew come the morning.
Moon has dropped her necklace,
but Sun is searching it out,
bringing the Earth to life
in a deluge of watery diamonds.

And I, a poor poet with eyes
bigger than my pen,
sit in awe of the majesty,
fumbling for phrases that
will capture these magic moments,
at a loss and limping on paper
through the limitations
of human language.

Faces from the Freezer

Michael Revere

I opened the freezer door last night
out walked two slices of bread,
they said they were so glad I'd come
because I was their favorite spread.

I opened the freezer door again
out walked two hunks of meat,
they said they were so glad I'd come
because they were starved and ready to eat.

I opened the freezer door one last time
out walked one very mad ex-wife,
she said she was so glad I'd come
because she was gonna stir fry the rest of my life.

I padlocked that freezer door shut
then ran and jumped straight into my bed,
but I woke up early the next morning
with a frozen chicken perched on my forehead.



Chris Kellam

Sunpower from the Grave

Michael Revere

When we quit hanging our clean laundry
 in the sunshine to dry
Great Grandmother Sewell
 sat up in her grave
and started screaming in my brain.
Only fools and their spoiled children
 throw perfectly clean clothes
in a hot wired metal box
 that cost money to run
when it's 83 degrees outside,
 not a cloud in the sky
and the birds are singing.



Doris Melton



John Ballentine

Face of Temptation

Michael Revere

A French hula hoop

dipped in silky milk chocolate

rolls merrily down 5th Avenue

wobbling with naked laughter.

The tormented minister

cried a sermon of tears

that he could preach

in public

but not practice

when he was alone.

The Seeker

Kathy S. de Cano

You know me.
Quite well, in fact.
Well enough to make a handsome
little living off my pain,

well enough to put just the right cover with just the right title
offering just the right miracle at just the right price
in all the right colors and at just the right time.

Every minute there is born another insecurity,
never mind that it's as ancient as all of humanity.
And that's right where you come in.
Tell an old story soothe an old wound
in modern English.

Look, I'm an old-style cook.
I measure salt in the palm of my hand and know when
the dish is right by the feel of it,
the look of it,
the smell of it.
I'm so good I don't even have to taste it.

So maybe that's where I'm going wrong.
I'm trying to cook up love with a recipe,
the very thing I've never been able to follow.

I've shorn myself of shame given guilt the jilt
 sworn off sin faked out fear
 wrestled with reality
 opened myself to honesty
 loved, yes, even me, unconditionally,
 and forgiven unconditionally so many times
 that unconditionality has become a condition.

But I haven't been touched in months and

(before that it was years
 bathing my bed in tears
 pouting to my pillow
 because I wanted him for an eternity
 invested over a year of endeavors in one night's serenity
 forgot that you said the real thing comes effortlessly
 he's back in his true saddle now
 she'll never even know
 that he took a ride on me [and how!]
 and after saying and doing all the right things
 just like you said
 to be whole
 to be free
 to need only me
 to forget about him
 healing my heart
 mending my mind
 smoothing salve on my spirit
 calling out for help
 believing God would hear it)

my skin still knows it.

Women and Moons

Kathy S. de Cano

Doesn't the night sing, though?
Sometimes soft and low,
deep and slow.

Stars like whispers of light,
the moon a croon tune,
oddly throated from one with such a full belly in June.

Fat lover she is tonight,
but I have seen her sleek and silver, too,
that woman of countless costumes,
both flawless and fickle,
glowing round or taunting in a trickle,
from circle to sickle,
harvest flaunted or merely reaping,
peering full-faced undaunted,
or from behind black curtains peeping.

So like many women we all love and know.
Don't they, too, all sing, though?



Merrie Belle Worley



Stephani Fajardo

Haiku

Sabrina Kumin-Kumar

introvert:
she speaks in sneezes—
brief explosions - and after,
an apology.

summer yard:
in a living sky—
dandelion moons woven
among clover stars

catnap:
sleep wraps around your
ankles and purrs to be held
just a while longer.

Zachary

Jessica Winkler

I croon as I gather his still form close to my body.

His Richard Scarry wordbook falls to the floor,

But I continue to sing,

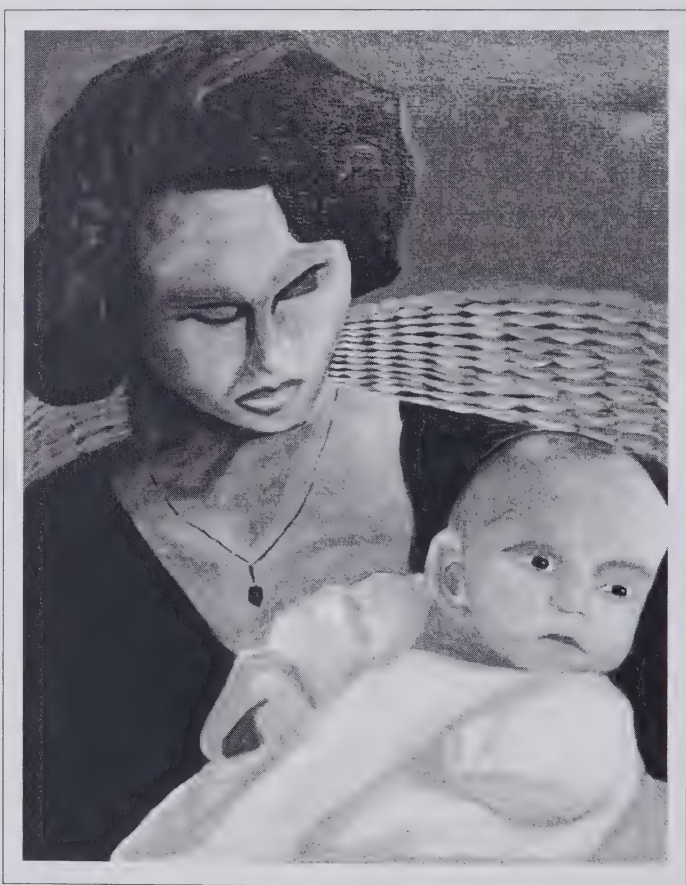
Humming the tune over and over

Until finally his eyes shut one last time.

If all goes well, it will be morning before they open again.



Mike McCoy



Anna Kernicki

(Untitled)

Karen Gilfillan

Baby daughter

Held ever so gently in my arms

Her fragile little body

Curled into my love

Thoughts past

Did my mama feel the same

Through my daughter's eyes

I look into her soul

I'm holding my mother

Untitled

Sabrina Kumin-Kumar

I wish that
I could write
A love poem
But all
I can write
Is what
I know.



Joshua Faust



Chris Kellam

victim

Sabrina Kumin-Kumar

other people have signs
or an attitude
that says,
"no dumping here."
you set out garbage cans
with their lids off,
thinking—it's community service...
thinking—someone has to take it,
 why not me?
you believe that because
they give their garbage to you,
it's yours,
so you swallow it up
(a psychological sewer)
to feed that insatiable beast in you
that cannot tell garbage
from love.

Coming Out of Madness

Kathy S. de Cano

How deranged to have
disposed of my defenses,
found fault with my fortitude,
settled for something less than strength,
toyed timidly with temerity as a tool,
and at the close of accounts, not found it lacking.

The woman in the crumpled cape once worn by strangers,
yanked off the bargain rack at some secondhand store,
is fully dressed again.

Her hair floats like fringe on the wind,
discovered one day when she came up for air.
She is walking on beauty,
lifted by leaves that refresh,
surrounded by her colors,
sated with the taste of silver waters on her tongue,
and full on the fruits of her hands.

Look! Her gestures are graces by gems.
There are opals on her fingernails.
Emeralds emerge from the pearly pools of her eyes,
and her lips are stained with rubies.
Wet from the womb of rebirth,
her vibrancy is violet,
her heart is a hunter,
her song is sung on sailboats.

Smoothly she goes over stony waters,
navigating now,
steering clear of the storm.



Troy Brolin

C a l l f o r S u b m i s s i o n s

Manuscripts for the 2002-2003 edition of *SCC Milestone* will be accepted through December 1, 2002.

Each submission should include the author's name, address and phone number on every page.

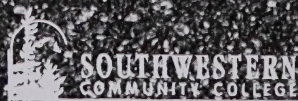
Essays, local history, poetry and short stories—as well as black-and-white artwork—may be submitted. All submissions should be typed or printed.

Seven people whose manuscripts or works of art are selected for publication will also receive cash awards.

- First and second prize in poetry
- First and second prize in prose
- First and second prize in artwork
 - Cover art

Students, faculty, staff, and alumni—along with residents of Macon, Swain, and Jackson Counties and the Qualla Boundary—may submit manuscripts to the *SCC Milestone*.

For additional information, contact Southwestern Community College's Public Information Office at 828.586.4091, extension 265.



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